

SUNDAY

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XII, Issue No. 189

SEPTEMBER 8, 2002

www.tribune.co.mp 50¢

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Around CNMI

Tourists advised to be vigilant against suspicious individuals

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

The CNMI Crime Stoppers is seeking the assistance of the community in resolving two burglary incidents that happened at the Bird Island Lookout in 2002, where thieves had reportedly preyed on foreign visitors.

Sgt. Tom Blas, Jr., Crime

Stoppers coordinator, said the organization is requesting assistance from the community for information that may help authorities arrest the thieves victimizing visitors in various tour sites on Saipan.

Blas said these sites include Ladder Beach, Wing Beach, Bird Island Lookout Point, the Grotto, Obayan Beach and other locations frequented by tourists.

Police recorded separate car burglary incidents on Nov. 23 and 24, 2003 at the Bird Island Lookout Point. In both cases, the victims went to the tourist site in the afternoon, went out for some sightseeing activities, and returned to their burglarized vehicles only a few minutes later, with their personal belongings already stolen.

“Perpetrators of these car

burglaries often target tourists at these sites commonly driving rental cars,” Blas said, adding that this series of criminal activities perpetrated against the islands’ visitors prompted the Crime Stoppers to seek community assistance in bringing to justice those who prey on CNMI guests.

The anti-crime group also urged visitors to plan their trip

around the island’s tourist sites ahead of time and, if possible, refrain from bringing valuables when they go sightseeing, or don’t leave the items inside the car.

Crime Stoppers also advised tourists to avoid parking their vehicles in secluded areas, or at least keep them in sight. “We also urge them to visit places that have

security guards and to travel in groups. They should also be aware of suspicious individuals loitering around the area.”

Crime Stoppers is urging individuals with information about any of these incidents to call the Crime Stoppers Tips Line at 234-7272. The Crime Stoppers pays up to \$1,000 rewards to any information leading to an arrest.

IUMC forgoes exchange gift to help kids in war-torn Iraq

Some years, the Immanuel United Methodists Church congregation has exchanged Christmas gifts. This year, the terrible situation of children in Iraq seemed to overwhelm the desire for spending money on gifts for each other.

The small congregation of 50-60 members gave \$1,300 to help Iraqi children.

In addition to the \$1,300, children from the larger Korean-speaking Immanuel Methodist Church, which provides space to IUMC, will be contributing their pocket and Christmas money.

All money will be sent to Church World Service to buy health kits for Iraqi children to help meet their day-to-day health needs. Children make up 50 percent of Iraq’s population. And, children in cases of war, are usually the ones to go without. They often die from lack of food, water and proper sanitation.

Some of the IUMC congregation chose to bring complete health kits. Sunday School children brought individual items to make health kits. Each kit includes one hand towel, wash cloth, comb, metal nail file or nail clipper, bar of bath size soap, toothbrush, 4-7 ounce tube toothpaste, and six bandages sealed in zipper closed 1-gallon



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Mark Deala shows the items in the health kits.



Sunday school children from English speaking Immanuel United Methodist Church and Korean speaking Immanuel Methodist Church gather with contributed health kits for Iraqi children.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

plastic bag. Each \$12-can provides one health kit. Shipping is extra. Kits are shared with people based only on need, regardless of religion.

Since the 1991 Gulf War, Church World Service has contributed nearly \$5 million for humanitarian assistance to the people of Iraq. Many

church organizations, including The United Methodist Church, send financial aid to impoverished people through Church World Service.

For further information on sending money and/or health kits to Church World Service, contact Pastor Bud Carroll at 322-6158.

Lack of land hinders seaport revenue—CPA

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority maintained that lack of land has persistently stalled the seaport division’s revenue-generating capabilities, which also holds up possible additional earnings for the central government.

In a report, the ports authority disclosed that the lack of land for additional container yard area and port operations topped the list of constraints faced by the CPA in its efforts to restore sound fiscal order this year.

The CPA report also noted that the pending exodus of the garment industry in 2005 as a result of the lifting of quota tariff poses a threat to the already decreasing revenue of the seaport division.

The CPA noted that unless additional measures are implemented to increase the seaport division’s revenue, the agency would have a hard time

meeting its steep supplemental bond reserve payments that amount to \$700,000 per year.

Despite the threats and the lack of additional help for Saipan seaport’s plans to increase non-harbor revenue generating measures, CPA is bent on resolving its major problem at the port: the maintenance dredging of the Saipan harbor.

Also, seaport officials projected timely completion of the feasibility study of Tinian and Rota harbors through close coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Ports officials also said that paving of the existing container yard at the Saipan harbor would be undertaken this year to allow easy access and smooth operations.

The report noted that ports officials would continue to lobby for the needed lands to establish the Saipan harbor as Micronesia’s transshipment hub and other Asian ports.

northwest jva

Matson, Sablan asked to stay in PSS for additional 60 days

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Two retiring Public School System program coordinators are asked to stay in the system for another 60 days or up to the end of February 2004.

The Board of Education, upon the request of PSS Commissioner Rita H. Inos, approved a 60-day waiver for federal program officer William P. Matson and E-rate program coordinator Nick Sablan.

The two are scheduled to retire by end of this month.

Inos, in her remarks before the board, said that Matson and Sablan's departure from PSS at this time would be disadvantageous for the system considering that they occupy "hard-to-fill positions."

She said Sablan's stay is crucial for the continued funding of E-rate program. "To leave the program now is not in the best interest of PSS."

PSS, based on the E-rate grant it received in 1999 from Federal Communication Commission's Universal Service Program, gets up to 80 percent subsidy in communication costs, including internet and telephone bills for schools and libraries.

Matson, who heads the PSS federal program office for several years now, according to Inos, is very much needed by the system in its continuing discussions with the U.S. Department of Education on several items, including Title 6, which involves sharing of federal funds with private schools.

Likewise, she said there are pending grant applications that require Matson's supervision.

"He is very instrumental in obtaining various federal grants for PSS...there will be closing of grants so we want to make sure that everything will be smooth," she said.

The board said the 60-day extension is allowed under the CNMI Constitution, but anything more than that would harm the retirees' claims.

"Unlike teachers who can get up to two years of extension, they (Matson and Sablan) would lose their retirement benefits if they stay longer," said BOE chairman Herman T. Guerrero.

Aside from Matson and Sablan, education associate commissioner for administration Louise Concepcion is also retiring on December 27.



Inos



Matson



RESPONSIBLE SERVING
Department of Public Safety officer Anthony Macaranas talks about the dangers of drunk and drugged driving before some members of the Northern Marianas Bartenders Association during a training program sponsored by the DPS and other agencies in efforts to educate the islands' bartenders on responsible serving of alcoholic beverages.

EDITH G. ALEJANDRO

Montgomery's sentencing reset—again

For the fourth time, the U.S. District Court postponed the scheduled sentencing of controversial trader Bert Douglas Montgomery for his convictions on wire fraud and money laundering charges.

The federal court reset Friday's supposed sentencing to December 30, its staff said Thursday.

Originally, Chief Judge Alex R. Munson had set Montgomery's sentencing on September 23. This was moved to November 18, and then to November 25.

The previous postponements were based on stipulation between the prosecution and Montgomery. Court staff did not specify if the same reason applies to the new postponement.

A federal jury found Montgomery guilty of three counts each of wire fraud and money laundering charges, and a count each of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and money laundering conspiracy. After a full-blown jury trial, the jury acquitted him only on one wire fraud count.

Montgomery has been jailed at the Division of Corrections in Susupe, after the court revoked his temporary release sometime last July. Prior to this, records showed that Montgomery was in home detention when he watched a movie at the Hollywood Theaters last June 20—thus, violating release conditions.

The court first cancelled Montgomery's pretrial release last May 2, after he was spotted at the Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino when he was restricted on the island of Saipan. The court released him later but not without electronic monitoring.

(John Ravelo)

NMC offers Mandarin, sign language courses

Northern Marianas College will be offering courses in the Second Language Certificate program, conversational Mandarin Chinese course and Creative Writing course in Spring 2004.

Second Language Certificate program

- LN 220 Introduction to Linguistics on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5pm to 6:25pm
- LN 240 TFL/TSL Theory and Methodology on Saturdays from 1pm to 4pm.

Conversational Mandarin Chinese course

- CN 100 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7pm to 8:25pm.

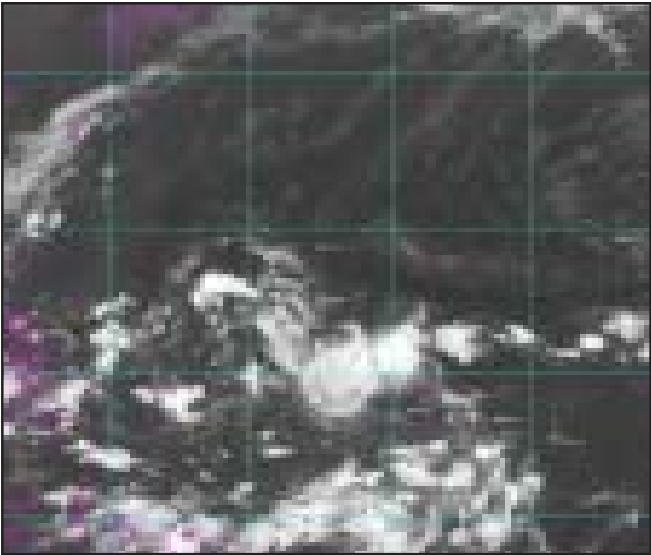
Creative Writing course

- EN 201 on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:30pm to 7:55pm.

cars

mcdo

WEATHER FORECAST



PICTURE TIME: 1 A.M., NOVEMBER 8, 2003
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A weak monsoon trough extends eastward from 6n130e to 7n155e to 13n165e. North of the trough...speed convergence in the trade wind easterly flow is generating scattered showers and thunderstorms north of Palau between 10n and 15n from 130e to 150e. Low-level convergence in the westerly flow south of the trough is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms near Chuuk within 60 miles of 7n153e...and north of Kosrae within 50 miles of a line from 7n160e to 10n166e.



SAIPAN AND TINIAN
Scattered showers & a chance of thunderstorms.
Winds: East at 20 mph.



GUAM AND ROTA
Scattered showers & a chance of thunderstorms.
Winds: East at 20 mph.



PALAU
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Variable at less than 10 kt.



POHNPEI
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Variable at less than 10 kt.



YAP AND ULITHI
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Variable at less than 5 kt.






















KOSRAE
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Variable at less than 10 kt.



CHUUK
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Variable at less than 10 kt.



MAJURO
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Variable at less than 10 kt.

CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
 Auckland	Partly Cloudy	61F (16C)	49F (9C)
 Beijing	Partly Cloudy	38F (3C)	24F (-4C)
 Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	85F (29C)	72F (22C)
 Honolulu	Sunny	87F (31C)	74F (23C)
 London, England	Cloudy	46F (8C)	39F (4C)
 Los Angeles	Cloudy	67F (19C)	54F (12C)
 Manila	Cloudy	87F (31C)	70F (21C)
 Melbourne	Sunny	72F (22C)	50F (10C)
 Miami	Partly Cloudy	86F (30C)	77F (25C)
 New York, NY	Sunny	46F (8C)	34F (1C)
 Osaka	Partly Cloudy	65F (18C)	52F (11C)
 Paris	Partly Cloudy	41F (5C)	32F (0C)
 Pusan	Sunny	74F (23C)	58F (14C)
 Rome	Thunder	61F (16C)	51F (11C)
 Salem, Oregon	Cloudy	54F (12C)	40F (4C)
 San Francisco	Rain	60F (16C)	52F (11C)
 Seoul	Rain	63F (17C)	39F (4C)
 Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	66F (19C)	58F (14C)
 Washington, DC	Sunny	50F (10C)	34F (1C)

Norton pleased with industry improvements

By JAYVEE VALLEJERA
ASSISTANT EDITOR

A visit to one of the garment factories on Saipan has convinced Interior Secretary Gale Norton of the many improvements the industry has gone through, saying she looks forward to further improvements in the sector in the years ahead.

Norton, together with a congressional delegation led by House Resources Committee chair Calif. Rep. Richard Pombo, toured a United International garment factory Friday morning where they saw first-hand the working conditions and met with some of the workers. The factory is owned by James Lin, who is the chairman of the Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association.

In an interview with reporters Friday, Norton said she is pleased with the many improvements she noted in the local garment sector and she foresees more advances through time—a development that relevant federal agencies would encourage.

“We had the opportunity to tour one [garment factory] today and see the workers at work, see the facilities provided for them, to ask about their wages and hours. I’m pleased to say that there has been a great deal of improvements and that we look forward to continued improvements but it certainly has made a lot of progress since the 1990’s,” she said. “I was pleased with what I saw; I think the conditions that we saw were clean and were something that...it seems to be well-enforced and regulated and

policed and it’s also something that the companies are trying to do on their own.”

When asked if she saw any areas that could be further improved, Norton said that overall, the wages and conditions at this point are good “but I think over time we will see things getting better.”

“We were especially focused on things like the OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] requirements, health and safety kind of requirements and we do continue to see progress and we will continue to work with people on those issues,” she added.

As for the local garment industry’s push to amend the Headnote 3(a) provision on the value-added requirement as it applies to the CNMI, Deputy

Assistant Secretary for the Interior David Cohen said the CNMI government has not asked his office yet to bring the matter before the Interagency Group on Insular Areas but if it does so, then his office would accommodate this.

“We’re happy to pursue it if they do. As you know, it is not within our jurisdiction to be able to reduce the value-added requirement from 50 percent to 30 percent... [But] at the request of the government of the CNMI, we’re happy to do that as well,” he said.

He conceded, though, that, given the political strength of the textile industry in the U.S. mainland, Cohen said the idea of pushing to amend the Headnote 3(a) provision, particularly in an election year such as this, could prove a tough sell to Congress.

“We know that, given the textile strength in the mainland, that might be a hard sell but we view our job as bringing issues of importance to the islands to the attention of the relevant federal agencies,” he said.

General Headnote 3(a) of the Revised Tariff Schedules of the U.S. allows textiles and apparel produced in the Northern Marianas to be imported to the United States free of duty if 50 percent or less of the value is derived from foreign material. The SGMA has been asking Congress to lower this requirement to 30 percent or less, saying this will save on costs, reduce waste, and allow the local apparel industry to compete globally once the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade goes into effect in Jan. 2005. The GATT would eliminate

quota restrictions worldwide.

Norton and the congressional delegation left Friday night for Guam.

On Guam, Norton said the delegation would also be studying and meeting over the same issues that they’ve taken up here in the CNMI. “We’ll be focusing on everything, from education and public health to understanding history and culture and having the chance to talk about our federal programs and how effective they are,” she added.

Before leaving, Norton said she is delighted “to have the chance to get such a warm, wonderful welcome from everyone here and to learn some of the things that we’ve been working on and studying in Washington.”



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dignitaries pose with the new members of the 10th Tinian Municipal Council. From left: Senator Henry H. San Nicolas, Rep. Norman S. Palacios, Senate President Joaquin G. Adriano, Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela, Tinian Mayor Francisco M. Borja, Chairman Edwin P. Aldan, Vice Chairman Jude U. Hofschneider, and Council Secretary Patrick A. Manglona.

Tinian swears in new council members

By JOEY C. CHARFAUROS
FOR THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

The weather could not have been any better as members of the community, dignitaries from on and off island, and family members were on hand to witness the swearing in ceremony of Edwin P. Aldan, Jude U. Hofschneider, and Patrick A. Manglona to the 10th Tinian Municipal Council.

After attending the Inaugural Mass at the San Jose Church to receive a blessing from Father Bernard Banal, the newly elected councilmen and their families made their way to the Tinian Courthouse for the 10th TMC Organizational Session to officially appoint the executive positions of the council members and respective committees.

Also in attendance at the Courthouse were Tinian Junior/Senior High School civic students who came with THS principal Florine Hofschneider to observe the proceedings and to experience what is involved in the organizational session of the Tinian Municipal Council. After the session, the students were allowed to ask council members questions regarding their job and what they hope to accomplish during their tenure.

After the session, the close to 70 people in attendance proceeded to the Kammer Beach’s main pavilion where the Oath of Office ceremony took place. On hand to officiate the oath taking was CNMI Superior Court Associate Judge Juan Lizama.

Immediately after being sworn in, the members made their inaugural address. Though the new members each had their own agenda for their tenure, they were all in agreement in promoting the casino industry, while pledging to work in harmony with the leadership.

Tinian Mayor Francisco M. Borja challenged not just the new council members but all the elected officials for continued cooperation; thus, showing the community that “the faith that has been placed on them will be rewarded the betterment of Tinian and all the Marianas.”

When asked about what he hopes to accomplish during his term, Council Secretary Manglona said that he is looking forward to working hand-in-hand with other elected officials to bring about a master plan for Tinian and to create a Municipal Trust Fund in order to set aside money for rainy days.

He would also like to help bring new laws to protect the

island’s natural resources and to promote the local industries such as farming and fishing in ecologically friendly ways in order to make Tinian the “Jewel of the Marianas.”

Council vice chairman Hofschneider reiterated the need to create a Trust Fund that would draw a percentage from casino revenues and placing it in reserves or investing it in money market accounts. The proceeds of which will be used to help subsidize healthcare, medical referral,

scholarships and other programs.

He also wants to revive the Tinian Street Naming Task Force in light of the economic growth that Tinian is experiencing. He would also like to push to expedite CIP funded projects that address the public dump, sewer line and the paving of the rest of the roadway around the island. Also he added that the problems of stray dogs on the island must be addressed.

Pastor Reid Ellis of Tinian Grace Christian Academy ended

the ceremony with a beautiful benediction and a blessing for all.

When asked for his comment, Chairman Aldan said that he is very proud that the people of Tinian have elected him. He pledged that he would strive to protect the biggest economic contributor on the island—the casino industry.

He closed by saying that he will strive to improve the educational system to ensure that Tinian produces bright and capable individuals for the future.

Viewpoints

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XIII, Issue No. 341

Published daily at 2/F Century Insurance Building,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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EDITORIAL

Action for AIDS

The World Health Organization this week released details of its “3 by 5” plan—by which it means to put 3 million HIV-infected people on anti-retroviral drugs by the end of 2005. Eight thousand people a day die of AIDS. Even if the WHO accomplishes its ambitious goal, it will reach only about half the people who urgently need the drug therapies that can convert HIV from a death sentence into a manageable chronic condition. Still, the WHO program—along with the Bush administration’s commitment to spend \$15 billion over the next five years and the efforts of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria—is a critical and belated response to a disease that is ravaging sub-Saharan Africa.

The problem of AIDS in Africa is so daunting that it has long paralyzed policymakers. Africa’s health care infrastructure is meager. Drugs are expensive. AIDS patients cannot simply be cured and sent home; they have to be treated for life. The principal accomplishment of the WHO plan is providing manageable standards for delivering care to large numbers of patients in settings that have long been considered too difficult to reach. The plan jumps the high hurdles by simplifying everything: delivering a standardized package of anti-retroviral therapies, for example, and training community health care workers in dispensing them and providing related services. Drug prices are expected to come down as more doses are purchased. Infrastructure will be created. The document provides, for the first time, the outlines of a strategy for attacking a global problem on a global level.

The estimated \$5.5 billion needed to make this happen is meant to come from various sources: governments in affected countries, the Global Fund, donor nations. There is enough money in hand at least to get started. Congress is poised to appropriate \$2.4 billion, including \$550 million for the Global Fund—significantly more than Mr. Bush requested—and the Global Fund is ramping up spending as well. But over the longer term, there is still a significant gap. Despite having the second-largest economy in the world, Japan has contributed less to the Global Fund than has the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Australia has not given a cent, and the oil-rich Gulf states have collectively pledged a mere \$10 million. The world’s resource commitment must be generous, broad-based and, as long as AIDS remains incurable, ongoing. The WHO has produced a kind of road map for making care available, but a map is only useful if people are willing to follow it.

The Washington Post

ONELA WORLD HERALD
KIDEBIN

Survey says: Duh!

By JIM SOLLISCH

Washington Post

One of my great joys in life is reading a research study, preferably done at an impossibly prestigious institution, hopefully costing millions of dollars and lasting several years, to which my reaction is, “Duh.” Like the study a few years ago that found broccoli to be good for you. Or those studies that come out every other month about how exercise lowers the risk of heart disease. Well, another breakthrough just in: A Mayo Clinic study has found that the spouses of snorers may wake up as often in the night as do snorers and thus suffer from many of the same symptoms. Come on, say it with me—I know you want to: Duh.

Anyone who has slept next to a serious snorer could have saved the Mayo Clinic a lot of trouble. I have never lived with a snorer, but I once vacationed with my in-laws (now my ex-in-laws) for three days and two nights. It would have been three nights, but my father-in-law snored so loudly that we left a day early. And he was in the other room, next to my poor, long-suffering mother-in-law, who, we now know, thanks to the crack team of researchers at the Mayo Clinic, has been suffering from a condition called secondhand snoring. I thought she was just perpetually cranky.

I happily anticipate the research being done at other prestigious universities to uncover other secondhand conditions. Secondhand brain loss syndrome. A team of researchers follows people who married airheads and then compares their IQ scores after five years of marriage and after 10. The results will show that marrying someone who watches TV all day and never reads can lower your own IQ. To which those of us whose brains haven’t atrophied will respond with a resounding “Duh.”

I also predict a big study to uncover the effects of secondhand wealth. This occurs when a person of moderate means marries a person who is filthy rich. That event causes the once-poorer spouse to have more money, which can lead to negative effects on his or her other relationships. People suffering from secondhand wealth often complain that their families don’t understand the demands of country club membership or keeping good help.

While we’re on the subject of marriage, let me tell you about a new study on mating, one that replicates the results of thousands of daily conversations between women and their hairdressers. Hold on to your spouse for this one. Women are more likely to have a fling with a man described as rebellious and promiscuous than with a man described as law-abiding and monogamous. Do we need a study of 257 college women, conducted by scholars at the University of Michigan, to tell us that women will pick James Dean over Jimmy Stewart for a little adventure? But here’s the really weird part. The researchers had the women read passages from the novels of Sir Walter Scott, a dead white guy, that contained descriptions of “cad-like” men and “dad-like” men. It seems no one with a PhD can resist a “duh” study. After this one was done, anthropologists, evolutionary biologists and zoologists couldn’t wait to weigh in with examples from the natural world. It seems many species of female birds pick flashy, brightly colored males for flings while choosing the gray feathered-suit types to set up the nest with. Maybe someone can do a study that shows men would rather have a one-night stand with a Victoria’s Secret model than with a widow over 40 who has six children.

But the best “duh” studies always involve food and health. Not long ago, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that women and the elderly have healthier diets than men and young people. If they spent more than 50 bucks of our tax dollars on this one, they should be ashamed. For \$50 a couple of researchers could have gone out to a decent restaurant and used their keen powers of observation to watch couples order dinner. He: “I’ll have the 32-ounce brontosaurus steak, an extra baked potato, sour cream, of course, a side of steak fries, and please bring the chocolate cake with the meal. Thanks.” She: “Just the garden greens for me. With the dressing on the side, please.”

As for the startling conclusion that the elderly eat more health-consciously than the rest of us—talk about redundancy. Who are the elderly? Women. All the men, having eaten brontosaurus steaks for 50 years, are dead. Duh.

Jim Sollisch is a commentator on NPR.

The boy and his gun

There's Charlton Heston when you need him? All across America, 12-year-old boys should be grasping their toy chests and vowing, in the words of the former National Rifle Association president, "From my cold, dead hands."

The recent scare caused by a toy gun that closed down a congressional building has prompted Brooklyn Democratic Congressman Ed Towns to declare a new urgency to passing his proposed ban on "realistic looking" toy guns. His bill would "ban toys which in size, shape or overall appearance resemble real handguns." Next Towns will be after "realistic looking" daggers, bows and arrows, battle axes and lightsabers—which, after all, could confuse Stormtroopers into thinking they are facing a threatening situation.

The spirit behind the Towns bill is outrage that toy guns exist at all. "It seems that the only thing toy guns accomplish," Towns wrote, "is to make it easier to commit a crime or whet kids' appetite for a real gun when they get older. They serve no purpose in society and should be banned." This is false. Toy guns serve an enduring, hallowed purpose—the delight of boys.

Why? It's human nature, the way boys are built. Liberals believe that, given enough persuasion, it somehow can be changed. This is the ambition of an outfit called The Lion & Lamb Project. It sponsors violent-toy "trade-ins" around the country as part of its "toys for peace" campaign. At the trade-ins, children fashion their "violent toys into a dramatic Peace Sculpture."

The average overenthusiastic boy might comment, "Great—and can the Peace Sculpture be turned into a cannon?"

There have indeed been tragic incidents of police accidentally shooting people holding realistic toy guns. But accidents happen. A man in Louisiana was shot when he brandished a cell phone that police mistook for a gun. Should cell phones consequently be banned? It's reckless behavior around police, not the objects involved, that tends to be the problem.

A famous case of applying the opposite reasoning has been playing out in Annapolis, Md. A 7-year-old there attempted to hold up a video store with a toy gun—the most absurd caper since Woody Allen tried a prison break with a gun made of soap in "Take the Money and Run." A city councilwoman promptly called for a ban on such toy guns, earning herself national derision. The first order of business should have been to tell the kid not to try to rob people.

Unfortunately, Towns, the scourge of toy guns, is not some outlier. Similar proposals are bubbling up in state legislatures, and it's impossible to buy a decent toy gun from Toys "R" Us. Too bad. As G.K. Chesterton wrote earlier this century about a different toy and its attraction: "The toy sword is the abstraction and emanation of the heroic, apart from all its horrible accidents. It is the soul of the sword, that will never be stained with blood." The toy-gun banners will never understand that—or the souls of boys.



By **RICH LOWRY**
King Features

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.



Should the governor declare an emergency in the state of health care for the people of the CNMI? With the abrupt and total suspension of CHC's family clinic operation, health care for the people of the CNMI has been seriously curtailed. People with ailments that are not life-threatening can no longer get treatment at the Commonwealth Health Center. Patients with chronic conditions can no longer get periodic check-ups at CHC. People due for annual health exams cannot get them at CHC. What's worse, there is no follow-up treatment for people seen in the emergency room. There are no referrals for people seen in the emergency room. There are no means for doctors to determine whether treatment or medication prescribed in the emergency room is helping or whether further adjustments are needed. There is no out-patient care.

The community has been told to use other medical facilities on island. But there's been no information provided as to which facility takes government health insurance, which take Medicare. There's been no assurance that each of the several health care clinics in the CNMI are accredited, are staffed by certified physicians, meet health care standards. Apparently, none of the facilities are authorized to accept Medicaid patients.

Then there's the question of medical records. They are not available on demand at CHC. Often it takes a week or more to obtain them. If one is ill, and needs to see a doctor, having to wait a week for medical records is ludicrous. To force people to see doctors who have no knowledge of the person's medical history, prior treatment, or current medications is fair to neither patient nor doctor. In fact, it could be downright life-threatening.

Does this present a health care crisis for the hundreds of people who would normally be seen and treated at the CHC Family Clinic every week? It most certainly does. Will the governor do anything about it? Only time will tell.

The crisis at CHC is due to a lack of doctors—a lack of family practitioners, to be exact. Family practitioners are trained to treat most general ailments of the general public. They are trained to consider the whole person, and to look for solutions to ailments in the interactions of the parts of the body as a whole. Internists, on the other hand, are trained to look only at the specific areas in which they have received special training—ear, nose and throat, or pulmonary diseases, or renal conditions. Often, they have limited training and limited experience in treating the day-to-day aches and pains of the general public.

Unfortunately, not only are there no family practitioners at CHC—and there have not been for quite some time—there are now only four internists. The number of pediatric physicians and emergency room physicians is not clear—but obviously, it is not enough to take care of the normal patient load at CHC.

Why is there a shortage of doctors? Apparently, there are two reasons: doctors who have come to the CNMI with every intention of working their full tour at CHC have been treated shabbily and have not stayed, and the lack of active, professional recruitment. Concern was once expressed about the wisdom of a practicing physician taking on the administrative responsibilities of running a department. Unfortunately, it would appear that those concerns were well-founded.

Once again, the misguided management practice of promoting individuals by taking them from the field and giving them administrative positions has been proved wrong. A good teacher does not necessarily make a good principal. The classroom loses, and nothing is gained. So, here, a good doctor does not necessarily make a good administrator. The patients lose, and nothing is gained.

I haven't seen the petition—rumored as being circulated—that calls for recall of the governor, but if I did, I'd be tempted to sign it if for no other reason than that I could then initiate a petition for the recall of the person who would become lieutenant governor. Under the CNMI Constitution, if a governor is recalled, the Lt. governor becomes the acting governor and the president of the Senate becomes the acting Lt. governor. And we all know who the president of the Senate is...

However, if the acting Lt. governor were recalled, then the

position would appear to fall to the speaker of the House. Which looks like it could be former speaker Benigno S. Fitial.

But all may not be lost. The Constitution provides that if more than a year in the term of office of the recalled official (governor or Lt. governor) remains, he or she may only hold office until a special election for the office is held. The trick would be to conduct the recall of the acting Lt. governor before the special election to fill the governor's seat was held and before the acting Lt. governor returned to his position as president of the Senate.

If the acting governor (i.e., Diego Benavente) were to run for governor in that special election, there would also have to be an election to replace the acting Lt. governor. But unless the Senate president ran for that position—an unlikely scenario—he would be free to return to being Senate president.

There is, however, another, prior, hurdle. According to the CNMI Constitution, once a recall petition is certified, it must be approved by two-thirds of the eligible voters at the next general election—unless a law calling for an earlier special election is passed by the legislature. The next general election is two years away—too late for the recall move to have much effect. On the other hand, it's pretty clear that no law approving a special election will pass the legislature so long as the unholy Babauta/Manglona alliance remains in place.

In effect, then, dreams, wishes, and complicated scenarios aside, there does not seem to be any point in conducting the recall except as a signal to the governor of the extent of the dissatisfaction and disappointment in his performance to date. Which might be worth the effort all on its own.

Senator Pete P. Reyes' proposal that each of the senatorial districts keep 80 percent of the revenue it generates (instead of the revenue going into the general fund as it does now) and contributes only the remaining 20 percent of its revenue to the general fund is certainly a novel idea. But without more data on just what the impact of such an approach would be on the infrastructure of the three islands—and on what is now supported by the general fund—his idea should remain a topic of discussion, not a topic of legislation, or of an initiative.

Though the behavior of the Senate president and his cronies has only exacerbated the uneasy truce that seems always to have plagued the three islands, taking punitive action is not the answer. At this point, Saipan could perhaps exist on its own, but the other two could not. It is in the interests of all three to find ways to work together. What appear to be needed—on an inter-generational level—are some serious trust-building/strengthening exercises among the three, along with heavy doses of the values and benefits of sharing, of brother/sisterhood, and of trust.

The reality is that in multi-island nations, some subsidy by the larger of the smaller is unavoidable. The correlative reality is that there is more strength in unity than in disunity.

Short takes:

■ Interest in the Sugar Dock renovation and Saipan-Tinian ferry project is growing by leaps and bounds, as they say. A website at www.savesugardock.org has been developed, and e-mails among interested parties have been flooding in-boxes. The project is on the agenda of the 12/9 meeting of CRMO agencies, scheduled for 9am and a public hearing has been set for 12/22 at 6:30pm at the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe. Stay tuned....

■ Earlier this week the governor apparently sent a note to the Senate president suggesting that his suspension of Saipan's three and Tinian's one senators be revoked. It certainly took him a long time to reach the conclusion that as governor, indeed he does have a role to play in "unify[ing] the community in times of disagreements." The belatedness of his awakening to that fact undercuts any sincerity his statement may have meant to convey.

Too bad the governor doesn't take his role in "unifying the community" seriously enough to take some positive action in that regard (see above).

■ Monday is Constitution Day—the second most important day in the Commonwealth's history—Covenant Day being the first. It offers a prime opportunity to honor and celebrate the provisions of the CNMI government's founding document. Yet again, however, there have been no observances or ceremonies announced—it's just another day off for government employees. How sad.

The writer is a librarian by profession, and a long-term resident of the CNMI. To contact her, send e-mail to ruth.tighe@saipan.com.

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Dollars & Sense

The people who steer the wheel

The new set of officers and board members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce were officially sworn into office Friday night at the World Resort Hotel. Meet the businesspeople who help ignite the flames of economic recovery on the island.

Alexander P. Sablan – President

Marketing/administration manager
Saipan Shipping Company Inc.

Sablan has been an active member of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce for the past eight years and is an official member representative for approximately fourteen years.

Sablan was a three-time chairman of the Business Person of the Quarter/Year selection committee, an active member of the Small Business Committee for two years and for a brief stint, sat on the Maritime Committee. Sablan was the Chamber Representative for the regional Exclusive Economic Zone forum with Guam delegates and has served as Chairman of both the Government Relations and Economic Development Committee and the Events Committee.

Sablan is currently serving as chairman or board member for the following organizations: member, Commonwealth Cancer Association; member, Guam Chamber of Commerce Maritime Affairs Committee; 2002-Present, Board of Director for the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands; 2002-Present, Advisory Board for the CNMI Public Radio KRNM 88/89.1 FM; 2002-2003, chairman for the Past President Council of the Rotary Club of Saipan; 2000-Present, president for the Association of Seaport Tenants and Operators of Saipan, Inc.; and 1999-Present, Board Member of the CNMI Contractors Association.

He also previously served as the CNMI representative to the American Cancer Society Guam/CNMI Presence Unit Board of Directors; chairman, 2000 American Cancer Society Relay for Life Event; president, Rotary Club of Saipan 1999-2000; board member, Rotary Club of Saipan 1997-2000; and member of the Kagman Komunitat Association.

For the past 14 years, Sablan has held management positions in the transportation industry in Saipan and Guam. He currently works at the Saipan Shipping Company as its marketing/administration manager. Prior to this, he was an owner's representative for a multi-diversified transportation company: heading Seabridge Micronesia as managing director; Pacific Air Inc., as general sales agent; for Northwest Airlines Passenger and Cargo Sales, as general manager-Saipan and Micronesia; and Saipan Crew Boats and Saipan Pilots, as general manager. Sablan has also been the general manager of Ambyth Shipping in Saipan.

Sablan is husband to Nora Mae Reyes Sablan and father to three children: Amanda (15), Kanani (14), and Sean (11).

Richard A. Pierce – Vice President

Executive Director
Saipan Garment Manufacturing Association
President/Owner, Safety 1st Systems (Saipan) Inc.

Pierce has been an active member of the Chamber. He was the SCC president in June 2001 until December 2002. He has also been an SCC vice president, SCC director, and served as the chairman of the Government Relations and Economic Development committee for several years. During his term as the GREL chairman, he provided timely and detailed updates on critical U.S.-CNMI

relations, in addition to valuable insight and knowledge when analyzing local legislation.

Pierce has been a resident of Saipan for over 20 years. He is the president and owner of Safety 1st Systems (Saipan), Inc. for 12 years. He is the former special assistant to CNMI Governor for Drugs & Substance Abuse.

Pierce is currently the executive director and an officer of the Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association, a former board member of the CNMI Wage Review Commission, the executive director and founder of the Western Pacific Economic Council, a former board member of the Governor's Free Trade Zone Authority, a board member of the Governor's Task Force on the 3-Year Limit, co-chairman of the Northern Marianas Alliance for Safety and Health, and sits on the boards of numerous corporations.

Pierce is married to Marian Aldan-Pierce, president of DFS Saipan, Ltd. He has three children, Richard, Rebecca, and Erynn.

Larry Knecht – Treasurer Regional Manager Controller & Budgets Verizon Micronesia/Pacifica

A resident of Saipan since 1997, he relocated from Fort Wayne, Indiana where he worked for Verizon and the former GTE organization for over 10 years in varying capacities.

A 1989 graduate of Indiana University with a Bachelor of Science in Business with concentration in Accounting, he also has received a Masters in Business Administration from the Indiana Wesleyan University. Knecht is also licensed as a Certified Public Accountant in Ohio.

After graduation, he worked for Ernst & Young in Toledo, Ohio where he was promoted to senior auditor. In 1992, he joined the Internal Audit Group of GTE Service Corp. as a lead auditor and later transferred to GTE Financial Reporting where he was responsible for non-regulated financial reporting for GTE Southwest, and in Business Analysis supporting the Indiana state general manager.

In December 1996, Knecht accepted the MTC assistant controller position and moved to Saipan with his wife Susanne. He was later promoted to Regional Manager Controller & Budgets, a position he has held since April 1998. Known for taking an active role in shaping and directing company goals and objectives, Knecht is credited for the development and implementation of a 401K Savings Plan for both management and craft employees. In 1999, he was awarded an Individual Excellence Award from GTE International.

Knecht and Susanne have three children, nine-year-old Luke, seven-year-old RJ and four year old Taylor.

Jay B. Jones – Secretary General Manager Triple J Motors

Jones was born and raised on Guam. After graduating from Father Duenas High School, he attended Elon College in North Carolina where he graduated with a B.A. in Corporate Communications. Upon returning to Guam with his wife, Deane, Jones started in Triple J's management training program, where he held various positions within the company. In 1993, Jones enrolled in the National Dealers Association Management Academy, an intensive year-long course that concentrates on modern automotive management.

After graduating from the program, Jay was promoted to the position of sales manager, a position he held until 1997. Jay served as an officer of the Guam Automobile Dealers Association from 1996 to 1997. In early 1997,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Back row: Larry Knecht, Jerry Tan, Mark Thompson, Scott Norman, and Michael Schadeck. Front row: Kanae Quinn, Alex Sablan, Jay Jones, and Tamara Hunter.

Jay relocated to Saipan where he manages Triple J's various operations and serves as general manager of Triple J Saipan, Inc.

He has served on the Board of Directors for the Rotary Club of Saipan, Commonwealth Automobile Dealers Association, and the Marianas Racing Association. He currently serves as an officer of the CNMI Free Trade Zone Authority. He was selected as the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's 2001 Business Person of the Year.

Jones and Deane have three children, 7-year-old Jacob, 4-year-old Jenna, and 1-year-old Jeremy.

DIRECTORS

Charles V. Cepeda General and Sales Manager Pacific Trading

Cepeda has been with Pacific Trading Company since 1996, with the exception of one-year, as sales manager and currently as general manager. He also serves as chairman for the Free Trade Zone Board, Council Member of Joeten-Kiyu Library Council, and Member of the Saipan Rotary Club. He has served as a board member for American Red Cross CNMI Chapter, Finance Council member for San Antonio Parish Church, chairman for DPS Law Enforcement Explorer Program, president of the Saipan Youth Football League, and board chairman for the Commonwealth Football League.

At a very young age, Cepeda worked in the family business of M.S. Villagomez Enterprises learning first-hand, from his grandfather Manuel S. Villagomez, about retail and wholesale management. While attending college, he continued his admiration for retail management at Montgomery Wards and upon returning home in 1993, he continued his managerial skills at J.C. Tenorio Enterprises, Inc. as buyer/manager for Athlete's Foot and Las Vegas Discount Golf & Tennis.

He was born on February 1, 1968 and graduated from high school in Saipan and went on to Chabot Community College in Hayward, California. Cepeda and his wife, Catherine Skilang Sablan, have one daughter, Cyji, who is attending Boise State University in Idaho.

Juan "Pan" T. Guerrero President – Juan T. Guerrero and Associates

Born in a U.S. Naval Hospital in Maturana Hill in Saipan, Guerrero is the

sixth child out of 12 children of Herman Reyes Guerrero and Maria Camacho Tenorio. As a business executive, he has held numerous professional experiences ranging from being the vice president and director of Saipan Hotel Corporation (Hafadai Beach Hotel); president of Mita Travel/American Express Representative; president of GTS Ent.; president of Juan T. Guerrero & Associates; president/general manager of Herman's Modern Bakery Inc.; president/CEO of Paras Ent.; president of GTS Security; president of GT Investment Inc.; partner of JTG Investment Inc.; director of Marianas General Corporation; director and secretary of Pacifica Insurance Underwriters; director of Micronesian Insurance Underwriters Inc.; president of Saipan Stevedore Company Inc.; Maintenance of Campbell Soup Factory in Omaha Nebraska; secretary/treasurer of Rota Industrials; Board of Director for Rota Terminal and Transfer Company Inc.; held around positions at J.C. Tenorio Ent.; and was even a clerk at the Capitol Hill Post Office.

In addition to his vast business background, he has held prestigious political positions. These include being a member of the House of Representatives for the 4th CNMI Legislature; member of the Senate for the 5th and 6th Commonwealth Legislature; president/director of the Democratic Party of the Northern Marianas; chairman for the Committee to elect Froilan C. Tenorio & Jesse C. Borja; overall chairman for the inauguration committee for the governor-elect Froilan C. Tenorio and Lt. Governor-elect Jesse C. Borja, overall chairman of the 50th anniversary of WWI Commemoration, and board member of CPA.

Guerrero has also been involved in civic and community services where he was the president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce; president of PTA for Saipan Community School; member of the Rotary Club; coordinator for the Boy Scouts of America; and is actively involved with the American Red Cross.

Guerrero is married to Roberta Kay Guerrero. They have five children: Vince, Tracy Marie, Jolene Esther, John Daniel, and Michael Robert. He is currently a resident of Gualo Rai, Saipan.

Jerry Tan

Vice President – Tan Holdings Corp.
General Manager – Century Insurance

Born in Hong Kong, Tan grew up on Guam and Saipan and has been a resident of these islands for the past 28 years. He was

Valedictorian of Barrigada Jr. High and JFK High Schools in Guam, and graduated Magna Cum Laude from University of Guam with a double major in Accounting and Management. Tan is the executive vice president of Tan Holdings Corp., a diverse holding company, which does business in 14 industries in the Western Pacific. He oversees the "non-apparel" companies for Tan Holdings Corp., which include the Century Group of Companies and numerous others.

He is vice president & director of Asia Pacific Hotels, which owns the Dai-Ichi Hotel Saipan Beach and Guam Dai-Ichi Hotel. He is also president and CEO of the CTSI Logistics Group, a company founded on Saipan, which today has offices in 19 countries. He is a director of the Luen Thai Group, a global conglomerate specializing in apparel manufacturing, logistics services and software development. Active in community service on Saipan, Tan is president of the non-profit Tan Holdings Foundation, a director of the NMI Chapter of the American Red Cross and co-chairman of this year's "Club 200", president of the Saipan Bowling Association, and president of the Northern Marianas College Foundation.

He and his wife Lydia and young and their daughter live on Saipan.

Michael J. Schadeck General Manager East West Rental Center

Schadeck grew up in St. Paul Minnesota, and went through St. Thomas Military Academy for high school, then on to the University of Minnesota for a business degree.

Tiring of the Minnesota winters, he moved to Pohnpei in 1982 and worked for the Board of Education, as well as a partner in several business ventures. In 1986, he called Saipan home where he ran the Crow's Nest Bar atop the Ship Ashore Restaurant in Garapan.

After turning that business over to a friend, he went on to work for Pacific International Marianas dba Midway Motors, where he was Marine Sales, Service and Parts Manager until 1992. From early 1992 through today, Schadeck has been the General Manager for East-West Rental Corporation, East-West Apartments, and R.S.A. Development Corp.. Schadeck has been a chamber member since 1992 and currently is the chairman of the Armed Forces Committee. In his spare time Mike is an avid, albeit mediocre golfer, loves spending time at the beach and in the ocean, and traveling in Asia.

Kanae S. Quinn Director of Sales & Marketing Pacific Islands Club

Quinn was born in Tokyo and raised in Los Angeles, California. She earned a B.A. in Asian Studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara and upon graduation, moved to Guam to join P.I.C. as a Clubmate in 1990. The following year, she transferred to Phuket Thailand to open the new P.I.C. resort and in 1992, relocated to Saipan. Prior to her current position as one of seven executive members of the resort, Quinn started in the Public Relations Department as Coordinator. She now oversees the efforts for all market segments. From 1997-1999, Quinn served on the Board as Secretary for the PATA Micronesia Chapter and chaired the Special Projects Committee. During the same period, Quinn was co-chairperson for the SCC Environmental Affairs Committee. Most recently, she has been involved in the Events and Education Committees. Quinn is married to Russ Quinn and is also an active member of PATA, MVA and the NMI Triathlon Federation.

Good Housekeeping

For many, home altars provide intimate touch for prayer

By MARY OTTO
THE WASHINGTON POST

On a secondhand table in his Washington apartment, Bill Janey keeps three worn Bibles, a vial of oil, a few photographs of friends, a tiny candle and a box containing a prayer list. Janey, a Pentecostalist, said he thinks of this spot as the bottom rung of his ladder to God.

Meggie Byrne meditates in the basement of her Colonial in Bethesda, Md., in a rec room turned prayer room. Her shrine is a table draped in fabric and dominated by a burnished statue of Buddha and seven bowls, which she fills with water every morning as a reminder of Buddhism's most profound teachings.

At her home in Howard County, Md., Maria de Fatima Cruz de Lacerda displays a statue of a white-robed Lady of Fatima, her patron saint, near her bed. But she performs her daily devotions at a bedroom table filled with figures of female deities drawn from Buddhism, Hinduism and other faiths.

The three Washington area residents follow different spiritual paths, but they share a belief in maintaining a home altar. A tradition in ancient cultures, the home altar has flourished in recent years among Americans who find that it powerfully expresses their intensely personal spirituality, religion scholars said.

Some home shrines are designed and maintained in accordance with formal religious guidelines. But many others are eclectic, highly individualized collections of objects. John McGuckin,



Maria de Fatima Cruz de Lacerda honors feminine powers at her home in Howard County, Md., with an array of goddesses on the altar. In modern times, home altars' popularity may have less to do with physical distance than with the spiritual gulf that separates many people from organized religion.

an Eastern Orthodox priest and professor of early church history at Union Theological Seminary in New York, said he has seen altars that combine figures of saints with running shoes and photos of boyfriends.

In rural parts of medieval Europe, home altars were kept by Christians who could not easily travel to church for communal worship, McGuckin noted. But in modern times, the altars' popularity has less to do with physical distance than with the spiritual gulf that separates many people from organized religion, he said.

"Today it's not so much that they can't walk to church. There are intellectual problems," he said. "They've retreated back to their little village. It might be a 14th-floor apartment, but it's their own little village."

Lacerda, 52, who was born in Brazil and raised Catholic, no longer attends church. The altar she has built in her bedroom symbolizes an amalgam of personal beliefs and experiences that have brought her closer to God, and it provides her with a more intimate and meaningful form of worship than any religious institution could offer, she said.

"Organized religion ... gives you the recipe for God, but it overlooks the kitchen and the tools, the onions and the garlic," she said.

In addition to her pantheon of divine females, Lacerda's altar includes candles, incense and a bowl of sand lined with dimes. The sand is from Hawaii and was consecrated by a Native American spiritual leader, she said. As for the dimes, she calls them "my 10-cent miracles"—coins that fate has dropped in her path at key moments since she immigrated to the United States as a teen-ager. One of them washed up on a beach at her feet

while she was praying. Sometimes she adds flowers, a rock or a feather to her altar.

"God can be a very personal aspect of who you are every moment," said Lacerda, who lives near Ellicott City. "An altar is a response to that."

By contrast, altars in churches are impersonal, she said: "The altar is for the priests. It's not for you."

Peter Kowalzik, whose online business, Sacred Source, sells devotional items, said he has had a steady increase in interest in home altars, and the Web site features photos of dozens of altars that customers have set up.

The store carries more than 500 "multicultural Goddess statues and sacred images," according to the Web site, and is organized by religion, with a menu that includes links to "Gnostic," "Norse" and "Wiccan and Pagan," among other categories.

"A lot of your pantheist customers—Wiccans and Pagans—are centered around the Celtic Wheel of the Year," Kowalzik said, and they change their home altar according to the season.

Nancy Brady Cunningham, author of "A Book of Women's Altars," one of several books about altar-making, gives lectures and consultations on the subject. Cunningham said the impulse to create an altar is not so different from a sports fan's desire to arrange posters and memorabilia of a favorite player or team in a certain way, or an office worker's need to put an inspiring photo and fresh flowers in her cubicle.

Mexican Hass avocados hide heart of gold

By PHILOMENA CORRADENO
KING FEATURES

Lucky us. Down in Mexico there's a bumper crop of the Hass variety of avocados. They're coming to our markets now, and we can count on enjoying them through about the middle of May. The Hass variety is the one with the dark green, bumpy, not-so-pretty skin that's protecting a beautiful, velvet smooth heart of gold. Avocados are nutrient-rich, with folic acid and other B vitamins and some fiber. The fats are the "good" ones.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has stringent regulations for growing (the orchards must be U.S. certified), harvesting, grading, packing and shipping. When they reach our ports they are again inspected before being shipped to approved distributors. What more quality assurance could you want?

Use avocados often to enhance ordinary salads, sandwiches and even with certain pasta and rice dishes.

Mexican Green Rice With Chicken And Avocado

- 3 cups cooked rice
- 1 (19-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup chopped fresh tomato
- 1 cup shredded lettuce
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro
- 1/2 cup prepared oil and vinegar salad dressing, divided
- 2 cups cooked chicken cubes



1 ripe Mexican avocado, halved, pitted, peeled and cut in 1-inch cubes

In a large bowl, combine cooked rice, beans, tomato, lettuce, cilantro and half of the salad dressing; toss. Arrange on a platter, lined with lettuce, if desired. In the same bowl, combine chicken, avocados and remaining half of the dressing. Spoon over rice salad. Makes 6 portions.

Pasta Mexican Style With Avocado

- 2 fully ripened Mexican avocados
- 1 (14 1/2-ounces) can, peeled, diced tomatoes in juice with jalapeño peppers
- 1 can (14-ounces) ready-to-serve chicken broth
- 8 ounces angel-hair pasta or fideos (half of a 1-pound package)

Cut avocados lengthwise around the middle; twist avocados to separate

halves; remove pits with a knife blade; scoop out pulp with a spoon; dice; set aside. In a large saucepan, combine tomatoes, chicken broth and 1 cup water; bring to a boil. Add pasta; cook until al dente, about 5 minutes; remove from heat. Stir in reserved avocado. Makes 4 portions.

Turkey And Avocado On Soft Tacos

- 1 fully ripened Mexican avocado
- 4 (6-inch) corn or flour tortillas
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 8 ounces sliced, cooked turkey or chicken
- 1 large tomato, sliced
- 4 ounces sliced Pepper Jack cheese

Preheat broiler; cut avocado lengthwise around middle; twist avocado to separate halves; remove pit with knife blade. Scoop out each half. Slice avocado into thin wedges. Place tortillas on broiler pan. Spread mayonnaise on one side of each tortilla, dividing evenly; place turkey on tortilla. Top with tomato, avocado wedges and cheese. Broil just until cheese melts, about 2 minutes. Fold tortilla and serve. Yield 4 portions.

TIPS: An avocado is fully ripe when it feels soft when pressed on the bottom with the thumb. To prevent discoloration, cover cut avocado securely with plastic wrap. Place plastic wrap directly on mashed or cut flesh.



Here, a \$49.95 polyester pillow in shades of red and blue with beaded fringe.

Graceland's Grace notes

By ANNIE GROER
THE WASHINGTON POST

Elvis Presley would've celebrated his 69th birthday this year.

And while it is generally accepted that the King left the building in August of 1977, his Memphis-based merchandising empire lives on, poised to embellish our interiors with the same high level of taste that characterizes El's 23-room Graceland mansion, not to mention his vast array of bejeweled jumpsuits.

From among all the throws and clocks, lamps and wall hangings in the official catalog (888-358-4776 for a free copy or www.elvis.com for the cyber version), we've chosen a splendidly cheesy \$49.95 polyester pillow with beaded fringe depicting EP in shades of red and blue.

How comforting to clutch it to our bosom while snarfing down a peanut butter and mashed banana sandwich (fried, of course, in lots of butter) or crooning "Are You Lonesome Tonight?"

The Good Life

The Good Life

The Good Life

The Good Life

The Good Life

The Good Life

Rosy Face

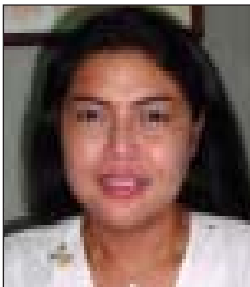
These are homemade treatments that will put a rosy glow on your face.

- Boil fresh rose petals and use this rose water instead of plain water for your skin treatments.
- Prepare a rose facemask by grinding a handful of petals into a paste. Apply on clean skin and leave the application on for 15 to 25 minutes. Then wash with plain water (no soap). Your complexion will be smooth and glowing.

Weekly Beautips

By LIGAYA ALMODIEL

Ligaya Almodiel may be contacted at 233-SKIN or log on to www.ksinternational.biz.



United States

United States

Terror warning level lowered to yellow

By JOHN J. LUMPKIN
AP WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Bush administration lowered the national terror warning level Friday as Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge said that an urgent threat had passed. However, the airline industry remained at high alert.

"I know we are all thankful that nothing happened," said Ridge, announcing the lowering of the threat level for most of the country at a news conference.

Ridge acknowledged that certain locations and sectors of the economy, which he did not identify, will keep their security posture at the orange level.

But a U.S. official speaking on condition of anonymity had said earlier that airports and airlines will keep their high alert status.

During heightened alerts, airports are asked to restrict parking near

terminals if necessary, increase law enforcement patrols of terminals and perimeters and conduct random checks of vehicles on airport roadways.

The alert level went from orange, signifying a high threat of terrorist attacks, to yellow, signifying an elevated threat. The conclusion of the holidays—and the large gatherings that go with them, played a role in the decision to lower the threat level, Ridge said.

"Although we've returned to yellow, we have not let our guard down," he said. "Yellow still means that we are an elevated risk of attack and we will maintain particular vigilance around some critical resources and locales."

Ridge said he did not know yet whether the orange alert had actually disrupted a planned attack on U.S. soil. Past increases in security measures have served as a deterrent, persuading

terrorists to change their targets, said Ridge, citing interviews with prisoners.

In particular, a group of operatives in Turkey decided not to target an American diplomatic building there because security was too tight, Ridge said. In November, they hit a British consulate instead.

"When we raise the security level, when you have more police, when you have frankly more security professionals involved in protecting communities and critical pieces of infrastructure, it is a deterrent. It does disrupt activity," Ridge said.

Homeland Security ranks threats by colors, starting with green at the bottom and followed by blue, yellow, orange and red as perceived dangers intensify. The warning level can be changed for the entire country or for specific regions and economic sectors.

The level was raised to orange, or

the second-highest level, on Dec. 21. That marked the fifth time the national alert level was raised to orange since the system was announced in March 2002. It has never dipped below yellow, representing an "elevated" risk.

Ridge said the decision to go to orange was sound. Several streams of intelligence pointed to imminent, simultaneous attacks against U.S. interests, he said.

Some officials have worried that operatives of the al-Qaida terrorist network were deliberately trying to spoof U.S. and international intelligence networks aimed at uncovering terrorist threats, by planting misinformation on lines of communications they believed were monitored.

However, other U.S. officials said the amount and energy level of the threatening intelligence were too widespread for this to entirely be a disinformation campaign.

"Clearly one of the biggest

challenges that the intelligence community has, that we have in this country, that we have internationally, is trying to distinguish between information that we should act upon and information that is intentionally designed to deceive us," Ridge said.

He said officials remain fearful about the aviation system, particularly the threat of overseas flights being hijacked and used in Sept. 11, 2001-style attacks on American targets.

Security was raised to extraordinary levels over the last several weeks. In particular, more than a dozen international flights were canceled and military helicopters patrolled during the large celebrations on New Year's Eve in Las Vegas and at Times Square in New York City.

In addition, the Homeland Security Department directed teams of experts to New York, Washington, Las Vegas and Los Angeles, to hunt for signatures of a radiological attack. None was detected.



Ridge

Govt orders second herd of cows killed

WASHINGTON (AP)—Animals from a second quarantined herd with ties to the Washington state cow with mad cow disease will be killed, U.S. agricultural officials said Friday.

Dr. Ron DeHaven, the Agriculture Department's chief veterinarian, said authorities soon will begin killing 129 dairy cows from the same Mabton, Wash., farm that was the last home of the infected Canadian-born cow.

"They were potentially exposed to the same feed source as" the infected cow, DeHaven said. Scientists believe that contaminated feed is the main transmitter of mad cow disease.

The cows will be tested for the brain-wasting disease and their meat will not enter the human or animal food chains regardless of the outcome of those tests, DeHaven said.

The decision to kill more cows linked to the first U.S. case of mad cow disease comes just as Japanese agriculture and health officials are in Washington to discuss safety procedures for American beef after the mad cow scare.

Mad cow disease, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy, eats holes in the brains of cattle and is incurable. Humans can develop a brain-wasting illness, variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, from consuming contaminated beef products. Officials have said, though, that the meat supply is safe.

The Japanese delegation plans to visit Washington state and Canada next week before deciding whether to lift a ban on imports of beef from the United States. Japan is the largest importer of U.S. beef.

DeHaven said the United States would drop, for the time being, a proposal to re-open the border to younger Canadian cattle, which are unlikely to have the disease because of its long incubation period.

The only other case of the disease



Greg Uberuaga, second from left, stands on his pick-up truck bed and waves the hamburger he is eating at three protesters from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals Thursday, Jan. 8, 2004, in Sunnyside, Wash., which is near Mabton, Wash., the location of a farm where the first case of mad cow disease in the U.S. was discovered in December.

in North America was discovered in an Angus cow from Alberta in May.

Officials have said they believe both cows probably were infected as calves because they were born before August 1997, when the United States and Canada banned cattle feed that contained parts of cattle, sheep or other cud-chewing animals.

Among the cows to be killed are nine Canadian-born animals that entered the United States with the diseased Holstein. Investigators can't

eliminate the possibility that the other 120 animals also came from the same dairy farm in the Canadian province of Alberta and were part of a group of 81 cows that came to this country in 2001, DeHaven said.

The animals will be culled from a herd of 4,000 dairy cows, he said. Investigators were able to rule out killing the bulk of the herd through records that showed the cows were born there or arrived on the farm from other locations, DeHaven said.

States return school funds to Feds

WASHINGTON (AP)—While state officials nationwide say they need more money to educate children, newly released figures show states are returning millions to the federal Treasury rather than spending it in the hinterlands.

Last year, states returned \$124 million to Washington that was to have gone toward large education programs such as special education and aid to poor children, according to Education Department data obtained by The Associated Press.

The states had more than three years to tap into the money before it reverted to the federal government on Sept. 30, 2003, said C. Todd Jones, a budget official in the Education Department.

The money was less than 1 percent of the \$18 billion in federal funding that had been allocated to states on formulas in force during that period, Jones said Friday.

It could have been put to good use in the states, he said, and they have much flexibility in the money's use. States, he said, "should seriously investigate why they are turning such large sums back to the federal Treasury."

States and territories that returned

the most were Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, New Mexico, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia, the department said.

"We try to spend every penny that the federal government sends us," said Debbie Ratcliff, a spokeswoman for the Texas Education Agency, which sent back \$11 million.

Ratcliff said schools sometimes let federal money lapse or fail to satisfy requirements for it, but she said the state agency doesn't always find out in time to send the money to alternative schools.

Tennessee, which returned \$3.9 million to the federal government last year, is working to fix the problem by having budget officers work more closely with program experts, said Kim Karesh, a spokeswoman for the state education department.

A range of critics say the 2002 No Child Left Behind education law is enormously underfinanced. The law places broad mandates on states, including a requirement for highly qualified teachers in all core classes, expanded standardized testing and data collection and reporting on student performance.

Elizabeth Smart suspected ruled incompetent

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—The homeless woman arrested along with her religious-zealot husband on charges of kidnapping teenager Elizabeth Smart was ruled incompetent to stand trial Friday and was committed to a mental hospital. Wanda Barzee, 58, will be periodically evaluated and could someday be brought to trial if found competent. Another review was set for April 15.

Barzee earlier this week waived her right to a hearing to contest the findings of two experts. One doctor concluded Barzee was paranoid schizophrenic; the other said she has a shared psychotic disorder, presumably with her husband, self-styled prophet Brian David Mitchell.

Based on those reports, Judge Judith

Atherton ruled that Barzee lacked the ability to assist in her own defense.

"I do find that she suffers from mental disorders, mental illness," the judge said in ordering Barzee to a state hospital "to restore her mental health."

Barzee and Mitchell, 50, are charged with aggravated kidnapping, aggravated sexual assault and aggravated burglary in the 2002 abduction of Elizabeth, then 14, from her Salt Lake City home.

The homeless couple allegedly kept Elizabeth as Mitchell's second wife for nine months in Utah and California. They were found March 12 outside of Salt Lake City. The girl, now 16, is back with her family.

Barzee did not speak at the hearing, merely nodding her head in response to questions from the judge.

Across the Globe

Five killed in Iraq mosque explosion

By SARAH EL DEEB
AP WRITER

BAQOUBA, Iraq (AP)—An explosion ripped through worshippers streaming from a Shiite mosque Friday, killing five people and wounding dozens, and police defused a car bomb outside another nearby mosque.

The apparently coordinated attacks came amid rising tensions between Shiite and Sunni Muslims following the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime.

Elsewhere, U.S. soldiers kicked open doors early Friday and dragged out men in a raid aimed at Saddam loyalists in his hometown of Tikrit. U.S. officials said they detained 30 men - including 14 suspected of orchestrating, financing or carrying out attacks on American soldiers. Among them was a man believed to have detonated a bomb that killed a female soldier from Texas.

In Baghdad, rockets struck a hotel used by Western contract workers, shattering windows but causing no casualties, and a homemade bomb exploded on a



People stand around a car destroyed in an explosion on a busy street Friday, Jan. 9, 2004, in Baqouba, Iraq, as worshippers were streaming out of a Shiite Muslim mosque after midday prayers, killing up to five people and wounding dozens of others.

street leading to a U.S. military base, wounding an Iraqi civilian and a child.

After the bombing in Baqouba, a religiously mixed city 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, wailing women tried to cover body parts as the

wounded walked in a daze. A man screamed in anguish as he knelt before two bodies.

Two hours later, people were still picking up remains. Blood oozed down the street, where worshippers who couldn't fit into the small Sadiq Mohammed

mosque had set up prayer mats for Islam's holy day.

The explosion was caused by a gas cylinder rigged with an explosive, U.S. officials said. Hospital officials and the Army's 4th Infantry Division, which is responsible for security in

Baqouba, said five people were killed, including the bomber, and 37 wounded.

There were conflicting reports about the attack. Master Sgt. Robert Cargie said the attacker tried to gain entry to the mosque but was turned away, apparently by guards.

"He walked a short distance away and detonated an improvised explosive device attached to a propane tank, killing himself," Cargie said.

Raad Sadek, who built and owns the mosque, said his brother saw the cylinder leaning against the door of the mosque, became suspicious and moved it to the middle of the street, where there was a large crater.

Suspicious had been raised because of the discovery 90 minutes earlier of the car bomb at the other Shiite mosque. It was rigged with four artillery shells, 330 pounds of TNT and a remote control device, the 4th ID said.

Faulty wiring prevented it from going off, according to a police investigator who spoke on condition of anonymity.

It was neutralized by a police bomb squad, the military said.

Libya signs \$170M jet bombing pact

PARIS (AP)—In another move to improve ties with the West, Libya signed a \$170 million compensation accord Friday with families of victims of a French passenger jet bombing 15 years ago.

Libya's promise to pay represents another move by Moammar Gadhafi to shed his nation's image as a rogue state. Last month, Libya renounced weapons of mass destruction and opened weapons production facilities to international inspectors.

The compensation deal, following years of painstaking negotiations, was signed in Paris by the director of a foundation run by Gadhafi's son and a negotiator for the families.

French President Jacques Chirac hailed the agreement, expressing "hope that 2004 will be the year of a resumption of cordial and confident relations between Libya and France."

France will now work with Gadhafi's government to fight terrorism and will favor its normalization of ties with the European Union, French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin said at a news conference with his Libyan counterpart, Abdel-Rahman Shalqam.

The Sept. 19, 1989, bombing of an UTA airlines flight over Niger's Tenere desert killed all 170 people aboard.

China uses new approach in SARS fight

BEIJING (AP)—Last year, when what would become SARS first appeared, you couldn't pry information loose from China's secretive government. Now, as the virus edges back into the spotlight, the country's leadership has a different message: Operators are standing by.

A Health Ministry hotline that opened this week is one extraordinary indication of a usually unresponsive government's starkly different public approach as it marshals forces for Round Two of the fight against severe acute respiratory syndrome.

This time, the government has worked hard to appear swift and decisive—and make frequent statements that sound open and informative.

The response reflects an evolution in the way China, long accustomed to burying bad news, is dealing with the press and the public—a change quite probably driven by the blistering overseas reaction to the way it handled things last time.

"During the first SARS outbreak last year, the lesson was quite grave. During that struggle, we improved our system and structures," Kong Quan, a spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry, said Thursday.

Few things are more important to the Chinese government than maintaining a good reputation abroad. Anything less threatens foreign investment, tourism dollars and the country's deep hunger for international respect.

For weeks last year, leaders simply denied the problem, accusing the international media of alarmism and suppressing reports in the state-controlled press. One official bristled at questions about what would be christened SARS, saying: "You can see that atypical pneumonia is not a very serious disease."

Only in late April, after one American newspaper called for a quarantine on China and rumors about the disease were reaching a crescendo, did China fire its health minister and promise a new openness and aggressiveness. But the damage was done.

Some officials now acknowledge privately that the government's first response to SARS last year was wanting -

an unusual admission for members of a leadership that rarely admits missteps. And those speaking publicly say it too, though less directly.

"The government's reaction to SARS this time is much better than the last time. It has made real progress in its crisis management," said Wu Aiming, a professor of public administration at People's University in Beijing.

In the latest anti-SARS effort, authorities in the southern province of Guangdong threatened fines of up to \$12,000 for merchants who try to hide civet cats ahead of a Saturday deadline to slaughter thousands of the animals. Many believe civets are responsible for the virus' jump to humans, though that remains unproven.

South Korea steps up security after threats

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea tightened security for its embassies and national airlines Friday after its embassy in Thailand received terror threats.

The embassy in Bangkok received a letter Thursday in which a group called the "Anti-Korean Interest Agency" threatened attacks on South Korean diplomatic missions and businesses in Thailand, Malaysia, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia and other Asian countries.

Embassy officials suspect that Thais working illegally in South Korea mailed the letter.

"The letter threatens to attack South Korean interests after my government imposed restrictions on illegal workers," said Ryoo Jung-Young, an embassy spokesman. "The letter said they will attack South Korean airlines and embassies."

He added that the embassy had informed Thai authorities of the threat and that police had been deployed for extra protection.

South Korea has recently cracked down on illegal workers, rounding them up for deportation. There are about 30,000 Thai workers in South Korea, about 70 percent of them illegally.

Prime Minister Goh Kun discussed the threat with South Korea's National Intelligence service and other government agencies.

The prime minister ordered heightened security for passenger flights, diplomatic missions and foreign embassies in South Korea, Goh's office said in a statement.

On Thursday, South Korea said it would screen all mail for parcel bombs amid a series of mail bombings in Europe and rising fears of terrorism ahead of Seoul's dispatch of troops to Iraq.

Postal workers have been

issued gas masks and antibiotics as a cautionary measure against possible biochemical terror via mail, such as the anthrax mailings in the United States shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

South Korea plans to send 3,000 troops, possibly including combat-ready special forces, to the northern oil town of Kirkuk to help U.S. forces rebuild Iraq. It already has 460 military medics and engineers in Iraq.

The al-Qaida terrorist network, responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks, has said it will target the interests of countries aiding the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq.

Group lists underreported world stories

NEW YORK (AP)—A medical aid group said Friday that the American news media last year provided too little coverage of some world trouble spots, including the conflicts in Colombia, Chechnya and Congo.

In its annual list of "underreported humanitarian stories," Medecins Sans Frontieres also cited a lack of media attention to the high death toll worldwide from malaria, the crises in North Korea and Somalia and the limited access of poor people to anti-AIDS medicines.

"It's clearly a valid criticism when applied most broadly to the American media, but some of those conflicts such as the Congo and Colombia, we (The Washington Post) cover quite aggressively," The Washington Post's assistant managing editor for foreign news, Philip Bennett, told The Associated Press.

Nicolas de Torrente, the executive director of the U.S. branch of MSF, also known as Doctors Without Borders, told The Associated Press that the list focuses on U.S. news coverage because American media underreport international events in general, except for security issues and the Middle East.

"I think there are economic aspects to the limited American news coverage of many regions," he said. "The other part is the assumption, the preconception that people are not interested. I don't believe that to be true."

The MSF report, released this week, said brutality toward civilians, including aid workers, increased in 2003. It also cited the predicament of Arjan Erkel, head of MSF's Northern Caucasus mission, who has been held hostage since he was kidnapped in the Russian republic of Dagestan in August 2002.

"Such insecurity contributes to preventing journalists from providing wider coverage of some of the world's most dangerous regions," the report said.

On some stories, the humanitarian dimensions were overlooked, the aid group said. For example, U.S. trade initiatives were widely reported, but the possibility that trade agreements would restrict poor people's access to lifesaving medications drew little attention.

Good Housekeeping

Entertainment

Relaxed wardrobe the new look for men

By DANIELA PETROFF
AP FASHION WRITER

The winter 2004 man likes his comfort.

Wholesome country-boy by day, and sophisticated playboy by night, he explores his gentler side, preferring tender to tough.

Gone are the macho styles that defined Milan menswear in past seasons, to be replaced by a relaxed wardrobe of tweed jackets, casual slacks and bulky knitwear. Evening is all about silk, from pajama-style trousers to silk-printed dinner jackets.

Black is relegated to the back of the shelf along with gray flannel, while tartan plaids and bright velvets offer a daring color scheme.

This new "metrosexual man"—the recently coined word for an urban, usually heterosexual men with a keen interest in fashion, shopping and elaborate grooming—wears his hair long and wispy, and prefers loafers, and sporty boots to swashbuckling footwear. He needs only one business suit, usually pinstriped and often double-breasted.

"It's a question of esthetics not gender," Giorgio Armani said backstage, after his Thursday show, which closed the five days of preview showings.

The menswear week was full of runway hype, from Tom Ford's farewell collection for Gucci, to gossip about the faltering Versace company, to the invasion of a new fashion sex symbol: soccer players who appeared on and off the runway.

Referring to Versace rumors, spokesman Jason Weisenfeld said, "At least they talk about us."

Questions include whether Versace will go public or even sell to a fashion conglomerate. The company lost an estimated \$7.25 million in 2002. Despite a 10 percent increase in sales in Europe and a 30 percent increase in the Far East, the company closed 2003 in the red.

Versace has repeatedly denied the rumor that Ford would join them after his Gucci contract is up. The American designer will officially split from the Gucci group in April.

Ford has been zip-lipped about his plans.

Wednesday night's preview show was over-the-top, from the scantily dressed pole dancers, to a hardcore sound track, to the impeccable collection. It included dark blue business suits, ultra tight trousers, white mink jackets, crocodile loafers and geometric patterned silk tuxedo jackets.

At the end of the show, the designer—whose charm and talent have made him a fashion favorite—walked the runway with a whisky glass in hand to hoots, tears, and a standing ovation. He raised his glass in a toast before disappearing backstage. "I didn't mean it to end this way," was his laconic comment.

Throughout the week the top menswear designers underlined the new "metrosexual" feel of menswear.

Ralph Lauren added softness to his country gentleman style, offering bright pinks and greens for casual knitwear as well as sumptuous velvet tuxedos.

Dolce and Gabbana evoked a symbol of the Latin lover—the late Italian actor Marcello Mastroianni—whose role in the Fellini film "La Dolce Vita" gave birth to a way of life devoted to bittersweet pleasure.

Calvin Klein, who sold his company to shirt makers Phillips-Van Heusen last year, sat in the audience Thursday, as new designer Italo Zuchelli walked in the shoes of the inventor of clean-cut design. The collection was more about sportswear than transgender philosophy. But the long-fringed scarves - a must for next winter at most shows - added a tender touch.

Gianfranco Ferre abandoned his trademark S&M black leather look to offer new romance for next winter. The designer indulged in decorative luxury from the braided hussar jackets, to the multicolored shoes and belt bags with engraved silver handles.

For Jil Sander and Miuccia Prada, the new style came easy. Minimalist fashion is by definition genderless. Both designers chose young, slight male models for their collections, which beyond the exquisite tailoring, could make up a shared his-and-her wardrobe.

While the Pride label collection—purposefully wrinkled, faded and stained—might cause a fashion-dumb date to suggest a trip to the cleaners, her second-line Miu Miu collection was all about safe and sellable clothes. There were lots of proper suits for the up-and-coming professional, as well as super cashmere sweaters for relaxation time.

For an expensive rainy day, Prada plays the knockoff game in reverse, offering Miu Miu nylon slip overs, perfect copies of the ones sold to motorcyclists at outdoor markets.

Comic strip character Popeye turns 75

By SUSAN SKILES LUKE
AP WRITER

Before Popeye the Sailor, Olive Oyl and Wimpy were the stars of a beloved comic strip, they walked the streets of this little town where their creator grew up.

Popeye's real-life alter ego, according to locals, was Frank Fiegel, a one-eyed, pipe-smoking man with a penchant for fistfights. Dora Paskel was unusually tall and thin and wore a bun at the nape of her neck. And theater owner J. William Schuchert so loved hamburgers that he would send his employees out between performances to buy them.

Popeye made his debut in the funny pages 75 years ago, walking onto Elzie Segar's "Thimble Theatre" comic strip on Jan. 17, 1929. The colorful locals from Segar's hometown had evolved into a pipe-tooting, spinach-chomping hero, the "goil" he was always rushing to save from danger, and a man with a paunch to prove his passion for burgers.

In honor of the 75th



Ernie Schuchert, left, nephew to J. William Schuchert, the inspiration for Wimpy, a character from the Popeye comic strip, and Laurie Randall, right, co-owner of Spinach Can Collectibles and the Popeye Museum, pose inside the museum in downtown Chester, Ill., Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2004. Saturday, Jan. 17, is the 75th anniversary of Popeye the Sailor Man's comic-strip debut.

anniversary, New York's Empire State Building will shine its lights spinach-green this weekend. A 3-D animated movie will air before Christmas on Fox. And Chester, population 5,200, will hold its annual picnic for

Popeye fans after Labor Day.

All for a character who humbly declares, "I yam what I yam," and who got his start when Segar cast his eyes around his hometown about 60 miles from St. Louis.

Locals say they don't know if Segar ever acknowledged his inspiration, but they attribute that to his death nine years after Popeye's debut. Around town, it just seems obvious that Popeye, Wimpy and Olive Oyl got their start in Chester—especially when you look at pictures of Fiegel's jutting chin, wiry frame and ever-present pipe.

"This is the folklore of Chester and you've got to listen to it," said Laurie Randall, who runs a Popeye museum in town.

Ernie Schuchert, 75, has spent his entire life in Chester, and remembers finding Fiegel kind of creepy when he would pass the one-eyed man on his way to school.

"He'd sit on a stoop outside his house, which was really dilapidated," Schuchert said. "I don't know that he ever knew he was Popeye."

Fiegel was a little guy like Popeye, Schuchert said, but without the dash of sweetness in his swagger. He would often get into fights at Wiebusch's tavern, and he didn't lose many.



This model presents an outfit at the Giorgio Armani men's Fall/Winter 2004/2005 fashion collection, in Milan, Italy, Thursday, Jan. 15, 2004.

Jackson shows up late to plead innocence

By LINDA DEUTSCH
AP SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Michael Jackson circus came to town Friday as the pop star showed up in court 21 minutes late to plead innocent to child molesting, got a scolding from the judge, and then danced on top his SUV in front of a cheering crowd.

Later, he invited fans back to his Neverland Ranch for refreshments.

Jackson's antics marked a bizarre start to a criminal case that could send the 45-year-old singer to prison for decades.

"Mr. Jackson, you have started out on the wrong foot here," Judge Rodney Melville said after the singer was tardy for his first court appearance in the case. "I want to advise you that I will not put up with that. It's an insult to the court."

The hearing began with Jackson pleading not guilty to seven counts of molesting a child under 14 and two counts of giving the child an "intoxicating agent," reportedly wine. Jackson spoke softly but firmly as he entered his plea, and stared straight ahead and showed no emotion while the judge took up various legal motions.

The hearing ended in less than two hours while Jackson was on a restroom break. The judge, irritated, remarked that Jackson's exit had caused a disruption.

About 1,500 people, including fans and media from around the world, swarmed outside the courthouse in a scene reminiscent of a concert.

Ozzy Osbourne returns home after accident

Ozzy Osbourne is back home after injuring himself in an all-terrain vehicle accident in England more than a month ago.

His wife, Sharon Osbourne, told her talk-show audience during the episode she taped Thursday in Los Angeles that her husband had returned to their house in Beverly Hills, Calif., the previous night.

"I am so happy he's home I can't begin to tell you, but my poor husband is in so much pain, he couldn't sleep all night and the one thing is ... he's got this metal rod ... instead of a collarbone now," she said during "The Sharon Osbourne Show" airing Jan. 22.

"I am just so happy that he's home 'cause all the time I ... felt so lonely, like I've lost something," she added. "You know that feeling when you know you've lost something and what is it? It's like, 'Oh, it's my husband!'"

The 55-year-old metal star stopped breathing twice and was in a coma for eight days after the Dec. 8 crash. (AP)



AP
Michael Jackson gestures toward cameras as he leaves the Santa Maria courthouse, Friday, Jan. 16, 2004, in Santa Maria, Calif. Jackson appeared in court for his arraignment on charges of child molestation.

Vendors sold T-shirts, steaks and hot dogs. Many fans had come to the courthouse in chartered buses and cars in a "Caravan of Love" from Los Angeles and Las Vegas.

Wearing a black coat, black pants with white stripes, a white armband, glittery shoes and big sunglasses, Jackson shook hands with fans and waved as he made his way through the crowd and into the courthouse.

Jackson removed his

sunglasses during the hearing and was surrounded by several family members, including his parents, brother Jermaine and sister Janet.

In contrast to his serious demeanor in the courtroom, Jackson was ebullient as he left the building amid a sea of cameras and fans carrying signs pronouncing his innocence and declaring, "We love you Michael."

Some fans brought their

children, and others dressed in costumes inspired by Jackson's music videos. One man wore what appeared to be a makeshift suit of armor.

"There's strength in numbers," said Amber McCrary, 26, who boarded a bus in a Los Angeles Kmart parking lot with her two children before dawn for the 150-mile trip to Santa Maria.

Jackson got atop the sport utility vehicle that brought him to court, briefly abandoning the umbrella he carries to shield his face, waved to the fans and did a few dance steps. Music played and a video cameraman standing alongside recorded the scene.

As Jackson tried to leave town, fans swarmed his vehicle, reaching through windows as guards and police ran alongside, sometimes shoving people back to clear the path.

"This was spontaneous love," said attorney Benjamin Brafman, a new member of Jackson's legal team. "This was not planned. I'm in the proceeding and I'm stunned."

Jackson was soon back at Neverland, about 25 miles away, where fans flocked after receiving invitations to a party. The invitations were distributed by supporters who appeared to be members of the Nation of Islam.

"In the spirit of love and togetherness, Michael Jackson would like to invite his fans and supporters to his Neverland Ranch. Please join us Friday, Jan. 16, 2004, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Refreshments will be served. We'll see you there," the invitation said.

civil rights leader Jesse Jackson and rocker Marilyn Manson, who will teach a session on music and marketing.

A team of roving "VJs" broadcast on location from campuses, as well as from the mtvU's New York headquarters, and the network will continue to offer news and information in partnership with CBS News. (CBS, like MTV, is owned by Viacom.)

"We have to reach (students) everywhere they hang out: on air, online and on campus," said Stephen Friedman, mtvU general manager, who called the revamped network "a laboratory and an incubator" in catering to its special audience.

MTV's college network gets new name

By FRAZIER MOORE
AP TELEVISION WRITER

MTV reintroduced its college-targeted network Thursday with a new name: mtvU.

"We basically have to put college students' lives front and center, and speak in their language," said Van Toffler, president of mtvU as well as MTV and MTV2.

Previously known as CTN: College Television Network, the outlet, acquired by MTV in October 2000, pipes student-oriented programming and ads into more than 700 U.S. college campuses.

Airing around the clock, it's

seen on specially installed televisions in dining rooms, student lounges and other public areas, and through certain cable systems also is available in dorm rooms.

Among the new initiatives for mtvU: a special selection of new artists whose videos will be featured on the TV channel, accompanied by free music downloads on the mtvU Web site and live performances at campuses on mtvU-arranged tours.

Other campus outreach efforts will include bringing notable figures to college classrooms as "fill-in teachers"—including Pulitzer Prize-winning author Frank McCourt,

George Harrison autograph case settled

The estate of George Harrison has settled its lawsuit against a doctor it accused of coercing the dying ex-Beatle into signing a guitar belonging to the doctor's son.

The guitar "will be disposed of privately" and Harrison's estate will give a new guitar to Ariel Lederman, the 14-year-old son of the doctor who treated Harrison for cancer two weeks before his death, according to a joint statement read aloud Friday

in federal court. No further details were available.

The settlement came 10 days after the lawsuit was filed against Dr. Gilbert Lederman, his three children and his employer, Staten Island University Hospital.

"George Harrison's music spoke to the heart and soul of my generation," said Judge Nicholas G. Garaufis, who presided over the settlement. He said the agreement "preserves the dignity and protects

the privacy of all concerned."

Harrison, 58, died in November 2001 after battling lung cancer and a brain tumor.

Two weeks before his death, the lawsuit alleged, Harrison was coerced by Lederman into signing autographs at a house near the Staten Island hospital. Lederman directs the hospital's radiation oncology department, which is known for treating large tumors with high doses of radiation.

Name-calling chases boy out of school and into home

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I have a friend I'll call "George." He is a good person, smart and fun to be with. He hasn't matured as fast as other boys and his voice is soft and high-pitched. People call him gay, and it hurts him terribly.

He recently dropped out of school and is now being home-schooled. When he told me why, it shocked me.

Won't you explain to your readers not to judge people until you have walked a mile in their shoes? Get to know them. I am the only person who stands up for George, and I always will. Please tell people it is not OK to ridicule others.

It hurts me to hear him say his life is ruined. He says he will get a new wardrobe and change everything. But he shouldn't have to change. He has a right to be himself.

CONCERNED FRIEND IN BILLINGS, MONT.

DEAR CONCERNED FRIEND: I don't have to tell people that it's not OK to ridicule others. You have done a good job of that in your letter. But I'll tell you a secret. People who make derogatory comments about the sexuality of others often have doubts about their own.

P.S. I'm sorry that George's parents didn't talk over their son's predicament with their lawyer and the school principal. If they had, I'll bet George would still be your classmate.

DEAR ABBY: I am a 37-year-old married woman. One night I walked into our bedroom and caught my husband looking at something. When he saw me, he stuck it between the pages of a magazine and began shuffling business papers. The next morning when he went to work, I opened the magazine and found a snapshot of a naked woman.

A few nights later he said he was going to hang out with some friends, so I decided to take myself out to dinner. When I walked into the restaurant, I saw my husband having dinner with the woman in the photo.

He didn't see me, so I left quickly. I didn't mention having seen him. Now I have noticed that he no longer really talks or listens to me, and he's making lame excuses to go out more often.

I want to save our marriage. But how?

UPSET IN LONGMEADOW, MASS.

DEAR UPSET: You will not save your marriage by remaining silent. Confront your husband with the fact that you found the photo and have seen him with the woman. Tell him that you love him but you feel betrayed and hurt, and offer him the option of marriage counseling. Marriages can survive this trauma, but only if both parties are willing to work at rebuilding the trust that has been broken.

DEAR ABBY: Three weeks ago my boyfriend, "Jeremy," proposed, and I am overjoyed. My problem is I hate the engagement ring he chose. I also hate the matching wedding band. I'm afraid if I mention trading them for something that I like, he'll be hurt.

Should I keep my mouth shut and live with the rings? Or should I speak up and risk hurting Jeremy?

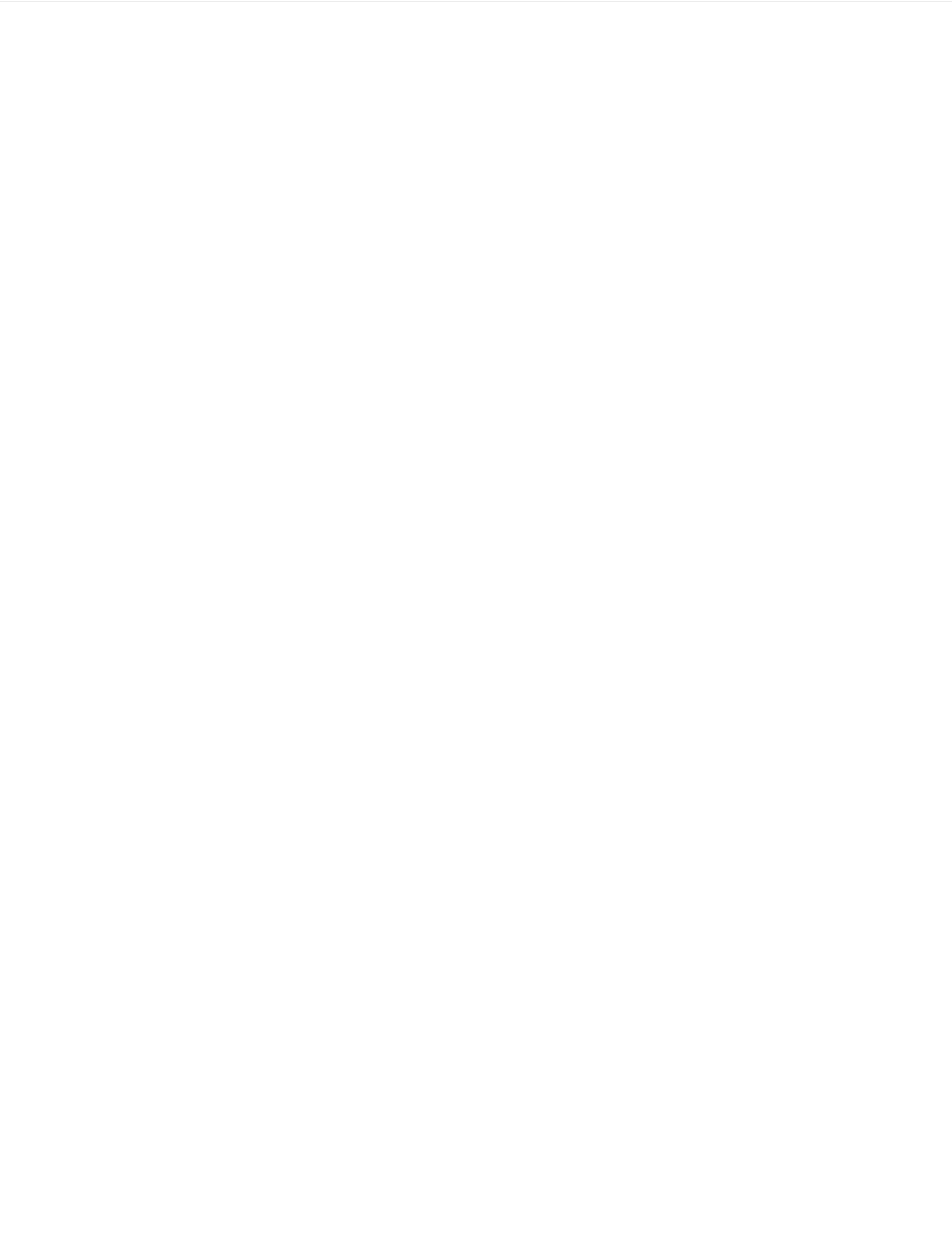
LOOKING FOR THE RING OF TRUTH

DEAR LOOKING: Speak up now because if you wait, it will probably slip out later at an inopportune time.

The lesson here is that the bride-to-be should be part of the selection process. It's not a difficult thing to arrange. All it takes is for the man to ask the salesperson to show his fiancée a selection of rings—or stones—that's within his price range. It's done all the time.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more attractive person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)



Knicks welcome new coach with win over Sonics



NEW YORK (AP)—Keith Van Horn scored 30 points for New York in just 28 minutes Friday as New York downed in the Seattle SuperSonics 108-88 in Lenny Wilkens' first game as coach of the New York Knicks.

"He was real, real cool. All he did, basically, was call timeout," Marbury said of Wilkens, who took over after Don Chaney was fired Wednesday.

Allan Houston added 18 in a game that turned into a blowout before halftime and Stephon Marbury had 17 assists before going to the bench for good with nine minutes remaining.

Two days after Don Chaney was fired, fans at Madison Square Garden were chanting Wilkens' name by the third quarter after seeing an example of how he'll try to open up the offense.

"I don't want them to take five steps backward," Wilkens said, "so what I'll do is just watch and tweak some of the things that they are doing offensively, encourage certain things."

Pistons 98, Wizards 77

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Detroit won its 11th straight game, routing Washington behind Richard Hamilton's 17 points.

Chauncey Billups added 12 points and 10 assists for the Pistons, who hadn't won 11 in succession since the 1990-91 season.

Tayshaun Prince added 16 points for the Pistons, and Mehmet Okur had 13 points and nine rebounds.

The Wizards have lost 10 straight on the road and five in succession to Detroit.

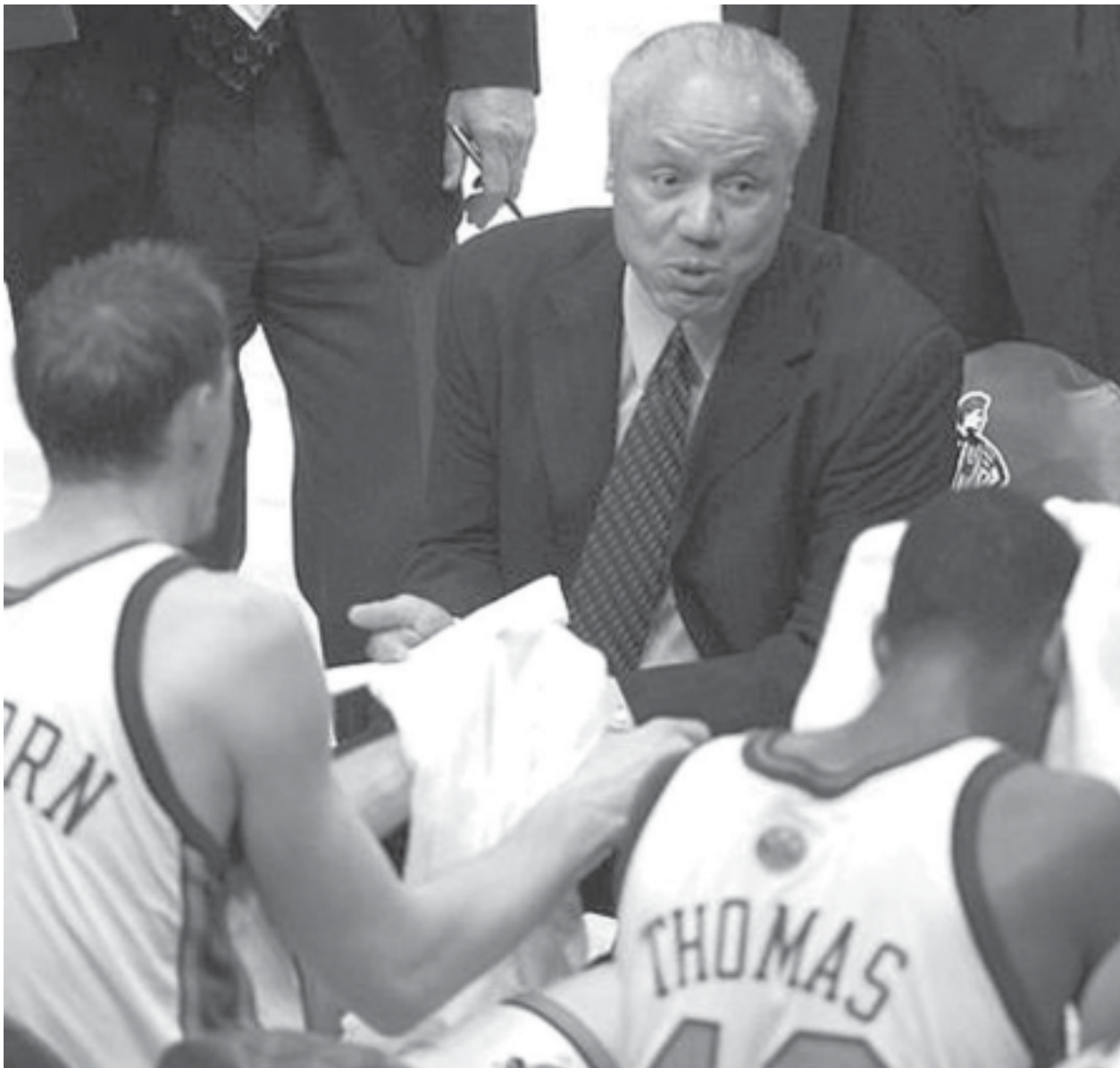
Pacers 89, Spurs 79

In Indianapolis, Reggie Miller scored 28 points, including seven 3-pointers, to lead Indiana over San Antonio.

Jermaine O'Neal overcame foul trouble to score 12 of his 20 points in the final quarter, when the Pacers took control.

O'Neal also had 10 rebounds and five blocks.

Tim Duncan led San Antonio with 16 points and nine rebounds, but the Spurs lost for the fourth time in five games.



Newly named New York Knicks head coach Lenny Wilkens talks to Kurt Thomas and Keith Van Horn during the third quarter against the Seattle SuperSonics, Friday, Jan. 16, 2004, at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Magic 124, Celtics 118, OT

In Orlando, Florida, Tracy McGrady had 42 points, Drew Gooden scored a career-high 32 and Orlando made its first four shots in overtime to beat Boston.

McGrady had his fourth 40-point outing of the season. He opened the extra period with a 3-pointer, making up for his missed 3 that would've won the game as time ran out in regulation.

Paul Pierce scored 20 points to lead eight Celtics in double figures, but he shot 7-for-26.

Celtics forward Vin Baker played

for the first time since he was suspended for failing to comply with the conditions of his aftercare program. He finished with 12 points.

Suns 104, Warriors 93

In Phoenix, Joe Johnson scored a season-high 26 points on 12-for-16 shooting—most of them from the outside—as Phoenix beat Golden State.

Shawn Marion and Amare Stoudemire added 21 points apiece for the Suns, who shot a season-high 56 percent.

Marion shot 7-of-11 from the field, including 3-of-3 on 3-pointers. He also

grabbed nine rebounds, had four steals and blocked three shots.

Mike Dunleavy and Erick Dampier each scored 19 points for the Warriors, playing their fourth game in five nights.

Phoenix went 9-of-12 on 3-pointers.

Mavericks 91, Nuggets 88

In Denver, Michael Finley scored five points in the final 1:26 as Dallas held on to beat Denver.

Dirk Nowitzki had 22 points for Dallas, which led by eight points with 4:56 remaining but saw the margin reduced to one.

Andre Miller scored 28, including eight straight Denver points to cut the lead to 89-88, but Finley accounted for the final margin with two free throws with 5.7 seconds left.

Finley and Antawn Jamison each had 16 points for the Mavericks, who won their third straight. Antoine Walker had 13 points and 10 rebounds.

Carmelo Anthony had 11 points and 12 rebounds for the Nuggets.

Kings 103, Lakers 83

In Sacramento, California, Peja Stojakovic scored 23 points as Sacramento routed injury-depleted Los Angeles in an anticlimactic meeting of archrivals.

Mike Bibby had 21 points for the Kings, who won their fourth straight and improved the NBA's best record to 28-9. But the Kings attached almost no significance to their first game of the season against Los Angeles — because these weren't the real Lakers.

Shaquille O'Neal, Kobe Bryant, Karl Malone, Horace Grant and Rick Fox all missed the game, leaving coach Phil Jackson, Gary Payton and the Lakers' supporting cast to endure the taunts and cowbells of Sacramento. The Lakers had won three straight with their diminished roster, but they were no match for the Kings.

Sacramento scored 17 consecutive points early in the third quarter.

Heat 87, Clippers 85

In Los Angeles, Eddie Jones capped a 21-point effort with a clutch 3-pointer in the final minute as Miami held off Los Angeles to end a four-game losing streak.

Lamar Odom, playing his first game against the team he spent his first four NBA seasons with, had 11 points and 15 rebounds in 37 minutes for Miami. Reserve Caron Butler scored 14 points for the Heat, who lost their previous five road games.

Miami committed a season-low five turnovers.

Elton Brand had 22 points and 12 rebounds, and Corey Maggette had 21 points for the Clippers, who played without Quentin Richardson for the third time in four games because of a sprained right wrist.

Kerry Wood gets \$9.75 million deal

By **RONALD BLUM**
AP SPORTS WRITER



NEW YORK (AP)—Kerry Wood and the Chicago Cubs avoided swapping numbers in salary arbitration, agreeing Friday to a \$9.75 million, one-year contract.

Wood, the cornerstone of Chicago's young pitching staff, was 14-11 with a 3.20 ERA last season and led the major leagues with 266 strikeouts.

Chicago will continue to negotiate with the 26-year-old right-hander, who combines with Mark Prior to form a formidable top of the rotation.

"We feel we'll have a multiyear deal done before spring training," Cubs general manager Jim Hendry said.

Wood is eager for the season to start. The Cubs came within five outs of making the World Series last year, and he'd like nothing more than to finish the job.

"We were happy with the season, but we were obviously disappointed," Wood said. "You're supposed to be playing baseball in October, and we plan on making a habit of that."

Two others players who filed for arbitration settled, leaving 61 players set to exchange proposed salaries with their teams Tuesday. Texas right-hander Francisco Cordero agreed to a \$2 million, one-year contract, and Cleveland left-hander Scott Stewart got an \$850,000, one-year deal.

Among free agents, outfielder Orlando Palmeiro agreed to a \$750,000, one-year contract with the Houston Astros.

San Diego agreed to a minor league contract with shortstop Rey Ordóñez, who would get a \$650,000, one-year deal if he's added to the 40-man roster, and Baltimore agreed to a minor league contract with catcher Keith Osik, who would get a \$500,000, one-

year deal if added to the roster.

Los Angeles confirmed its minor league contract with right-hander Rick White (\$700,000 if he's added to the roster) and also agreed to a minor league deal with backup Jeremy Giambi, who missed the final two months of last season because of a torn ligament in his left shoulder.

Todd Zeile and the New York Mets reached a preliminary agreement on a contract, contingent on the infielder passing a physical early next week. In 15 major league seasons, the 38-year-old Zeile has played for 11 teams, including the Mets in 2000 and 2001.

Ivan Rodriguez has been offered a \$40 million, four-year contract by the Detroit Tigers, a baseball source told The Associated Press on Friday.

The 10-time All-Star catcher and his agent, Scott Boras, were in Detroit on Thursday, according to the source who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Adu is first pick in MLS draft

By **PAUL NOWELL**
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina

(AP)—In a move that surprised no one, 14-year-old soccer phenom Freddy Adu was selected by D.C. United as the first pick in the Major League Soccer draft.

"I'm in awe right now," Adu said Friday after D.C. United took just more than three minutes to make a selection that had been predetermined. "I've been waiting for this moment for a long time."

"I can't wait to get on the field and start playing," added Adu, who will try to win a starting spot with United when their season starts in the spring.

Adu signed with Major League Soccer in November and was assigned by the league to the Washington team.

Adu was a high school All-American as a freshman and attended the U.S. under-14 boys' national team camp in 2001. He began playing for the U.S. under-17 team last year at 13, scoring 22 goals in 2002 and a team-leading 29 goals in 46 games this year.

He led the U.S. team to the quarterfinals of the under-17 world championships in Finland in August, scoring three goals in the opener and the winning goal in the second game.

Several top European teams were interested in Adu, including Manchester United, Chelsea and PSV Eindhoven. But European soccer's complicated rules probably would have limited him to a youth team rather than a top club until 2007, when he turns 18.

In MLS, he can play as soon as DC United thinks he's ready. It also allows him to stay at home.

Wie comes up one shot short at Sony Open

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP GOLF WRITER

HONOLULU (AP)—This is one time a 14-year-old girl dreads having the weekend off. Michelle Wie battled to the very end Friday, making two birdies on her final three holes for a 2-under 68 that left her one shot short of making the cut in the Sony Open.

“I cannot believe it,” Wie said, exasperated that her even-par 140 wasn’t enough to play on the weekend. Maybe another time - like, soon.

The youngest player in the PGA Tour record books, Wie posted the lowest score ever by a female competing against the men. Se Ri Pak had a 3-under 69 last year in the third round of the SBS Super Tournament on the Korean PGA Tour, where she tied for 10th.

That was as low as Wie could have gone. She saved par on nearly half her holes, and two of her birdies Friday at Waialae Country Club were from at least 50 feet.

Still, it left a strong field at the Sony Open in awe.

“It’s pretty incredible,” former Sony Open winner Jerry Kelly said. “She’s opening the door.”

She tied for 79th, and finished ahead of 49 other players who make a living on the PGA Tour.

Steve Allan of Australia shot an 8-under 62, and at 129 held a one-stroke lead over Harrison Frazar (63) going into a weekend that won’t have nearly the crowd or the excitement.

Defending champion Ernie Els (64) was another stroke back at 9-under 131. He spent the afternoon in his hotel room watching Wie, with whom he played a practice round Tuesday.

Craig Bowden shot 64 playing with Wie, a round only his wife will remember.

Wie returns to the ninth grade at nearby Punahou School, but she left quite an impression - not only with her 68, but the strong finishing kick.

Despite a good chip to save par on No. 15, Wie knew she had to play the final three holes in 3 under to make the cut.

She didn’t go down without a fight.

With the sun setting over Diamond Head, Wie belted her longest drive of the week, 311 yards down the middle. Her approach stopped 15 feet beyond the cup, and she holed it for her sixth birdie of the week.

She pulled her tee shot on the 189-yard 17th, the ball bouncing



Michelle Wie, left, is greeted by playing partner Craig Bowden, right, after saving par on the 17th green of Waialae Country Club during the second round of the Sony Open in Honolulu, Friday, Jan. 16, 2004.

off the grandstand into the rough about 100 feet from the flag. Fighting to the end, she pitched to 4 feet and saved par for the eighth time in the round.

Wie needed an eagle on the final hole to make the cut, and she gave herself a chance with another big drive, leaving herself 252 yards to the hole.

She hit 3-wood a little too much in the air and it landed softly in front of the green, rolling into the first cut of rough. With a packed grandstand quietly watching, her chip for eagle headed to the hole and turned away, running about 4 feet by to end her hopes of making the cut. Wie finished in style with her seventh birdie of the week.

Nearly 5,000 people - a larger crowd than the Sony Open usually gets for the final pairing Sunday - followed her around Waialae, and PGA Tour players stopped on the range to watch when she came up the ninth hole. “I played with her on

Tuesday, and she wasn’t feeling well and wasn’t playing well,” Paul Azinger said as Wie played the back nine. “I thought she’d get waxed out here, but she’s proving me wrong. I’d like to see her make a few birdies and make the cut.”

Wie was trying to become the first female in 59 years to make the 36-hole cut in a PGA Tour event.

Babe Zaharias did it at the 1945 Los Angeles Open, then shot 76 and failed to qualify for the final round. No other women played on the PGA Tour until Annika Sorenstam last year at the Colonial.

Sorenstam had rounds of 71-74 to miss the cut by four shots. Connecticut club pro Suzy Whaley qualified for the Greater Hartford Open last year, but missed the cut by 13 shots.

This one came down to the very last hole, although it’s difficult to compare Wie with Sorenstam.

Sorenstam had enormous pressure. She was the first woman in 58 years on the PGA Tour, and faced intense scrutiny for three months leading to her opening tee shot. Plus, Sorenstam already was established as the best player of her generation, and expectations were high.

Still, Waialae (7,060 yards) and Colonial (7,080 yards) are similar in length.

The Sony Open had a stronger field, featuring Vijay Singh, Ernie Els and Davis Love III among six of the top eight players in the world.

And remember, Wie is in the ninth grade.

“If she makes it, that will be a lifetime achievement on this tour,” Els said after he finished his round.

She was one shot away. As fans streamed out of Waialae, they ran to the scoreboard to see if she made the cut, then slumped their shoulders and quietly filed out the gates.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New Jersey	21	16	.568	-
Boston	20	22	.476	3 1/2
Philadelphia	18	21	.462	4
New York	17	24	.415	6
Miami	16	24	.400	6 1/2
Washington	10	28	.263	11 1/2
Orlando	10	30	.250	12 1/2

Central Division

Indiana	30	11	.732	-
Detroit	27	13	.675	2 1/2
Milwaukee	22	17	.564	7
New Orleans	22	17	.564	7
Toronto	20	17	.541	8
Chicago	12	27	.308	17
Cleveland	12	27	.308	17
Atlanta	11	29	.275	18 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Midwest Division

Minnesota	26	11	.703	-
San Antonio	26	14	.650	1 1/2
Dallas	23	16	.590	4
Houston	22	16	.579	4 1/2
Denver	23	18	.561	5
Utah	21	17	.553	5 1/2
Memphis	20	18	.526	6 1/2

Pacific Division

Sacramento	28	9	.757	-
L.A. Lakers	24	12	.667	3 1/2
Seattle	19	18	.514	9
L.A. Clippers	16	20	.444	11 1/2
Portland	16	21	.432	12
Golden State	16	23	.410	13
Phoenix	14	26	.350	15 1/2

SONY OPEN

Second Round

Steve Allan	67-62	129
Harrison Frazar	67-63	130
Ernie Els	67-64	131
Luke Donald	66-66	132
Robert Gamez	67-66	133
Jesper Parnevik	65-68	133
Hideki Tanihara	67-66	133
Pat Bates	68-65	133
Fred Funk	69-64	133
Frank Lickliter II	71-62	133
Jerry Kelly	68-65	133
Paul Azinger	67-66	133
John Riegger	68-66	134
John Huston	67-67	134
D.J. Brigman	69-65	134
Briny Baird	68-66	134
Craig Bowden	70-64	134
Richard S. Johnson	68-67	135
Jason Bohn	69-66	135
Kevin Na	68-67	135
Carlos Franco	63-72	135
Jonathan Kaye	67-68	135
Corey Pavin	68-67	135
Davis Love III	70-65	135
Craig Barlow	66-69	135
Scott Simpson	70-66	136
Stephen Ames	66-70	136
Joe Durant	70-66	136
Charles Howell III	68-68	136
Tim Herron	67-69	136
Retief Goosen	67-69	136
Shaun Michael	72-64	136
Bo Van Pelt	71-65	136
Ryan Palmer	70-66	136
John Maginnes	68-68	136
Brian Gay	69-67	136
Jonathan Byrd	67-69	136
Brenden Pappas	67-69	136
Hidemichi Tanaka	67-70	137
Brent Geiberger	70-67	137
Mark Hensby	68-69	137
Tjaart Van der Walt	69-68	137
Vijay Singh	69-68	137
Duffy Waldorf	70-67	137
Michael Allen	68-69	137
Ted Purdy	66-71	137
David Ishii	66-71	137
Olin Browne	70-68	138
Bart Bryant	68-70	138
Danny Briggs	71-67	138
Omar Uresti	72-66	138
Aaron Baddeley	66-72	138
Chris Riley	69-69	138
Ben Crane	68-70	138
Shigeki Maruyama	71-67	138
Heath Slocum	67-71	138
Andre Stolz	68-70	138
Bobby Kalinowski	70-68	138
Russ Cochran	69-69	138
Jeff Brehaut	69-69	138
Bob Burns	71-67	138
John Senden	71-67	138
Brad Lardon	69-69	138
Joe Ogilvie	71-68	139
Todd Fischer	69-70	139
Tom Lehman	72-67	139
Peter Jacobsen	69-70	139
Tom Carter	70-69	139
Ken Duke	70-69	139
Rod Pampling	72-67	139
Cameron Beckman	70-69	139
Pat Perez	70-69	139
Tommy Armour III	72-67	139

Loren Roberts 71-68 139
Woody Austin 69-70 139
Kenichi Kuboya 73-66 139
Arjun Atwal 71-68 139
Jason Dufner 69-70 139
Lucas Glover 71-68 139

(50 players, including Michelle Wei, failed to make the cut)

SPORTS TRANSACTIONS

MLB

ANAHEIM ANGELS-Agsigned OF Gary Johnson to Salt Lake of the PCL.
BALTIMORE ORIOLES-Agreed to terms with C Keith Osik on a minor league contract.
CLEVELAND INDIANS-Agreed to terms with LHP Scott Stewart on a one-year contract.
TEXAS RANGERS-Agreed to terms with RHP Francisco Cordero on a one-year contract. Released RHP Reynaldo Garcia. Assigned RHP Travis Hughes and 1B-OF Jason Jones outright to Oklahoma of the PCL.
CHICAGO CUBS-Agreed to terms with RHP Kerry Wood on a one-year contract. Named Grady Little scouting consultant and assistant to the general manager.
CINCINNATI REDS-Agreed to terms with OF Reggie Taylor and LHP Mike Matthews on minor league contracts.
HOUSTON ASTROS-Agreed to terms with OF Orlando Palmeiro on a one-year contract. Designated OF Colin Porter for assignment.
LOS ANGELES DODGERS-Agreed to terms with RHP Rick White and INF-OF Jeremy Giambi on minor league contracts.
SAN DIEGO PADRES-Agreed to terms with SS Rey Ordenez on a minor league contract.

NBA

NEW YORK KNICKS-Named Mark Aguirre and Dick Helm assistant coaches. Retained Herb Williams and Michael Malone, assistant coaches.
ORLANDO MAGIC-Signed F Lee Nailon to a second 10-day contract.
WASHINGTON WIZARDS-Signed F Torraye Braggs to a 10-day contract.

NFL

ARIZONA CARDINALS-Named Clancy Pendergast defensive coordinator, Frank Bush linebackers coach, Robert Ford wide receivers coach, Deek Pollard defensive line coach and Bob Wylie offensive line coach.
BUFFALO BILLS-Retained Jerry Gray, defensive coordinator.
CINCINNATI BENGALS-Named Hue Jackson receivers coach. Signed RB Skip Hicks and CB Alvin Porter.
CLEVELAND BROWNS-Named George Edwards linebackers coach.
GREEN BAY PACKERS-Fired Ed Donatelli, defensive coordinator and Jeff Jagodzinski, tight ends coach.
MIAMI DOLPHINS-Signed WR Nick Davis, LB Brendan Givan and OT Dan Goodspeed.
PITTSBURGH STEELERS-Named Dick LeBeau defensive coordinator.
ST. LOUIS RAMS-Named John Benton assistant offensive line coach.
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS-Named John Shoop quarterbacks coach and Kyle Shanahan offensive quality control coach.

COLLEGE

NCAA-Reinstated Tulsa basketball C Oswald Gonzalez, giving him one year of eligibility for next season.
AMERICAN EAST-Named Mollie Lehman assistant commissioner.
BAYLOR-Announced the NCAA has restored the eligibility of senior C R.T. Guinn and senior F Terrance Thomas to the men's basketball team.
BUFFALO STATE-Fired Robert Swank, football coach.
CLEVELAND STATE-Declared men's basketball freshman C Walt Waters and junior G Percell Coles academically ineligible for the remainder of the season.
COASTAL CAROLINA-Signed Pete Strickland, men's basketball coach, to a two-year contract extension, through 2006.
GEORGIA SOUTHERN-Named Joe Tresey defensive coordinator.
GREENSBORO-Named Sergio Turbay assistant golf coach.
NEBRASKA-Named Kevin Cosgrove defensive coordinator and linebacker coach.
NORTHERN ARIZONA-Named Albin Polonyi men's and women's tennis coach.
WASHINGTON-Named Chip Lydum associate athletic director.

By The Associated Press

The Week in Sports

The initial wave

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY MARK RABAGO AND SHAN SEMAN, REPORTERS

Golf, table tennis, softball and roccball were in the spotlight the previous week and provided sports's first salvo this year.

In golf, Nestor "Toto" Siruelo grabbed the attention away from more accomplished golfers by topping the 2003 Fil-Taga Golfer of the Year Tournament held last weekend at Marianas Country Club and Kingfisher Golf Links.

The 48-year-old Siruelo finished the two-day tournament with a 6-under 138 to nip first round leader Ted Malaran for the championship cup and \$500 purse.

In ping-pong, Simon Li finally received his championship trophy when the Marianas Amateur Table Tennis Association held its 2003 Singles Open tournament awards banquet last January 9 at the Iron Chef Restaurant in Garapan.

Li got his much deserved first place trophy after eating dinner with runner-up Budhi Gurung, third place Su Yong Deng and the rest of the MATTA membership and their friends.

The Brotherhood, meanwhile, took the early lead in the 2nd Annual Crime Stoppers Slow Pitch Softball Tournament. The team blasted through the opposition last weekend and became the first finalist in the two-week softball event.

The Commonwealth's indigenous sport of roccball also returned last week



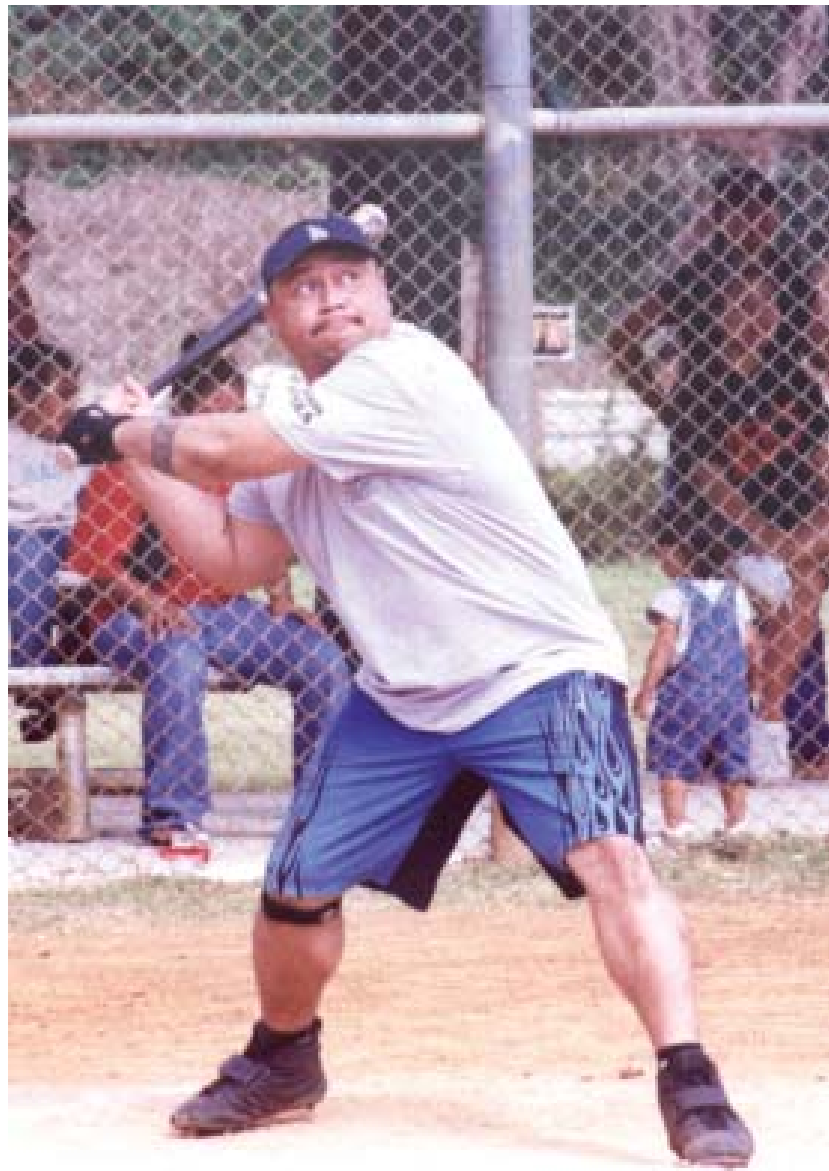
Members of Korea's Shin Il High School baseball team shake hands with the CNMI Junior Nationals after a scrimmage last Saturday night at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field in Susupe. Shin Il won, 16-1.



Winsor Peter of Brotherhood races home to score a run.

with the sport's founder James Feger introducing some new rules during pre-season games at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Also last Thursday, the CNMI Junior National Team left for Palau where they will compete in the AAA Oceania Baseball Championships.



Danny Punimata of Team Para has his eyes set on the ball while at the plate during last weekend's 2nd Annual Crime Stoppers Slow Pitch Softball Tournament.



Franco Flores of the CNMI Junior Nationals lays off a pitch against Shin Il High School.

Members of No Fear and Shag battle for a point during a Rocball scrimmage match last Saturday at the Marianas High School. The match was an experiment as organizer James Feger incorporated new rules to the game.



Parents and team officials met last Tuesday evening at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium conference room to make sure everything was settled before the CNMI Junior National baseball team headed to Palau for the AAA Oceania Baseball Championships.



2003 Fil-Taga Golfer of the Year Tournament winner Nestor "Toto" Siruelo lifts the championship cup during the awards ceremony held at Angela's Diner last Sunday.



From left: Runner-up Budhi Gurung, 2003 MATTA Singles Open Table Tennis Tournament champion Simon Li, and third place Su Yong Deng are all smiles after receiving their trophies.



Rey Ferraz, left, computes the results of 2003 Fil-Taga Golfer of the Year Tournament held over the weekend at Marianas Country Club and Kingfisher Golf Links,



Rosalyn Camacho and Edward Jeon pose with 2003 MATTA Singles Open Table Tennis Tournament runner-up Budhi Gurung, middle, at the awards banquet.



The initial wave
Golf, table tennis, softball and rocball were in the spotlight the previous week and provided sports's first salvo this year.

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Saipan Tribune Sports

Knicks welcome new coach with win over Sonics

Keith Van Horn scored 30 points for New York in just 28 minutes Friday as New York downed in the Seattle SuperSonics 108-88 in Lenny Wilkens' first game as coach of the New York Knicks.

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28 SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 2004

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Expanding horizons in 2004



BANMI president Rufino Aguon uses the white board to explain a point during tryouts, above. Aguon hands NMASA president Mike White a plaque for his contributions to Oceania basketball, below.

SHAN SEMAN

By **MARK RABAGO**
REPORTER

The president of the Basketball Association of the Northern Mariana Islands has not given up on the Commonwealth becoming a relevant basketball force once again in the region.

In fact, Rufino Aguon is jumpstarting the national basketball program this year by sending national teams to a couple of off-islands tournaments in the next few months.



First up for BANMI is assembling a team of 18-and-under players to compete in the 2004 Marianas Invitational Basketball Tournament in Tinian this March. Aguon will personally coach the Saipan

All-Stars in the competition, where they are the defending champions.

"Unfortunately, national disasters hijacked the staging of the MIBT last year. We will defend what we won in 2002 and hopefully build from there," he said.

And then on July, BANMI will be sending a crack national team composed of the best possible cagers from the CNMI for the 2004 Marianas Basketball Tournament to be held on Guam.

Aguon and his lieutenants are so dead serious in the MBT that he has invited former national players in Tinian to attend tryouts, which began last week.

"Tryouts were by invitation only. Players that have played in previous BANMI leagues before were the only ones picked. Our final decision will not be based on basketball skills, talent, athleticism and height alone but will also depend on their attitude and how they mesh with teammates on the floor," said Aguon.

The BANMI president and many-

time national team coach hopes the exposure in the two regional basketball competitions will not only season his players but also put CNMI basketball back in the map.

"I hope that the off-island competitions we committed to will overall enhance our knowledge of the game and make us better players and coaches," he said.

Aside from tournament abroad, Aguon also wants CNMI basketball to improve on two other fronts.

He wants officiating on the islands to get better as well as develop new coaches for the future.

"We need to encourage more coaches and referees to buy into the system we are developing. We [current BANMI officials and coaches] cannot do this forever and we should always be in constant search for new and fresh talent out there," said Aguon.

On a scale of 1-10, the BANMI president rates 2003 as a six. He said the setback by the men's team in the

Micronesia Basketball Tournament last November and BANMI's failure to field a team in the Suva, South Pacific Games were definite low points.

Aguon, however, noted that the women's team's victory in Palau, the obvious growth of BANMI's youth programs - Rotary, IVYBL and 25-and-under tournaments - and the certification of referees to Level II and III more than made up for the bad times.

He thanked BANMI year-round supporters like Verizon, Pacific Trading Co., and Florence Kirby and Tom Tebuteb of the Governor's Office, and Rep. Ray Tebuteb and Rep. Andrew Salas for all their contributions in 2003.

Aguon also singled out Division of Sports and Recreation director Tony Rogolifo and his staff over at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium for another job well-done last year. Last but not the least, he also expressed his gratitude to the parents and fans that always come out and watch games and wishes they will continue to do so again this year.